

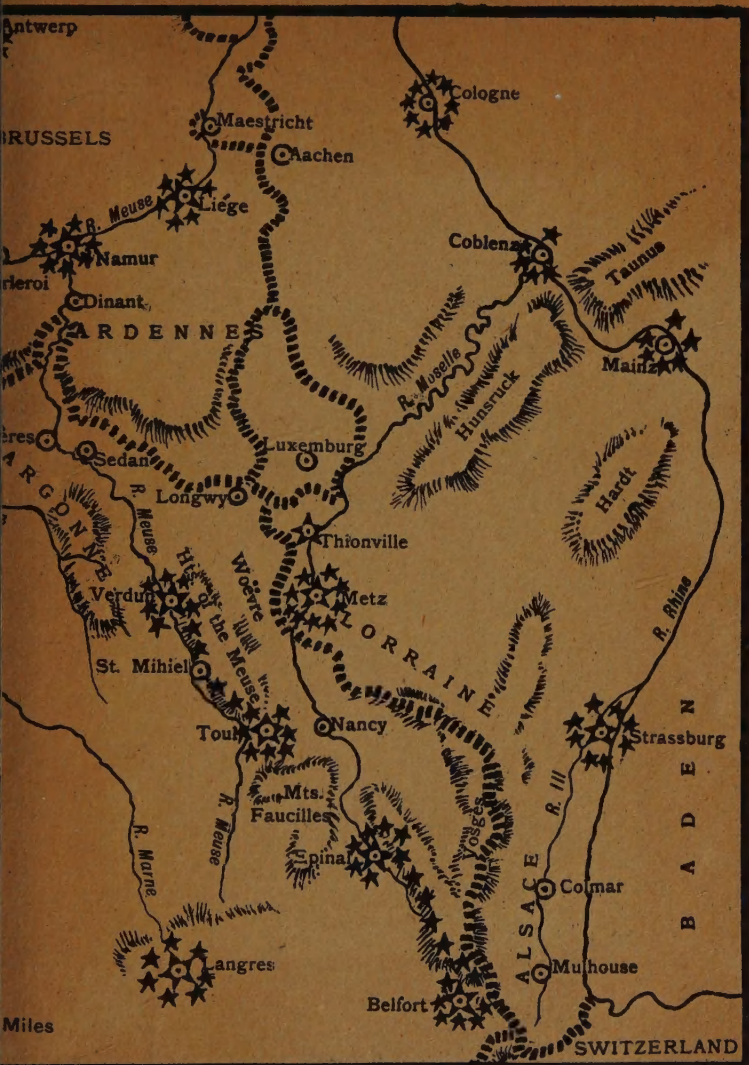
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NELSON'S
HISTORY OF THE WAR

VOLUME XX.

NELSON'S HISTORY
OF THE WAR. By
John Buchan.

Volume XX. The Summer Campaigns of 1917.

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NELSON'S HISTORY OF THE WAR.

CHAPTER CXXXIX.

THE THIRD YEAR OF WAR : THE CHANGE IN THE STRATEGIC POSITION.

The Difficulties of Contemporary History—Obscurity of Position at the End of Third Year of War—Contrast with June 1916—The Failure of the Allied Offensive Plan owing to the Russian Revolution—Military Results of the Year—End of War on Two Fronts—The Year's Tactical Developments—The Campaign in the Air—The Allies' Man-power—The Raising of the American Army—The American Effort—The War at Sea—The Development of the Submarine—The British Policy—The Position in June 1917—American Tonnage—American Destroyers join the British Fleet—Changes at the Admiralty—The Political Situation—The Demand for a Definition of War Aims—Influence of America—The True and False Internationalism—Mr. Lloyd George's Glasgow Speech—State of German Opinion—Germany's Fear for her Economic Future—Economic Position of the Belligerents—Nations now arrayed against Germany—The remaining Neutrals—The Allied Outlook in June 1917—Its Uncertainty—Military and Political Reputations—Sir Douglas Haig.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH, in the preface to his *History of the World*, excuses himself for not writing the story of his own times, which (he says) might have been more pleasing to the reader, on the ground that "whosoever in writing a modern history shall follow truth too near the

heels, it may haply strike out his teeth." To Napoleon, on the contrary, it seemed that contemporary history was the surest. "One can say what occurred one year after an event as well as a hundred years. It is more likely to be true, because the reader can judge by his own knowledge." * Between two such opinions reason would seem to decide for the second. The greatest of all historians wrote what was in the strictest sense of the word contemporary history. Thucydides played his part in the first stages of the Peloponnesian War with the fixed resolution of becoming its chronicler, and he saw the ebb and flow of its tides, not as political mutations, but as moments in the large process of Hellenic destiny. With such a writer, living in the surge of contemporary passions, and yet with an eye abstracted and ranging over a wide expanse of action and thought, no reconstructor of forgotten ages from books and archives can hope to vie. For the scholar in such a case competes with the creator, the writer of history with one who was also its maker; and the duller must thrill when in the tale of the struggle for Amphipolis the opponent of Brasidas is revealed as Thucydides, son of Olorus, ὃς τὰδε ἐννέγραψεν.†

But Raleigh's warning holds true, at any rate of the contemporary annalist. He cannot stage his narrative or prepare the reader for a sudden change by a gradual revelation of its causes. His work must have something of the apparent inconsequence of real life. He records one month a sanguine popular mood and a hopeful forecast; three months

* *Correspondance de Napoléon*, xv. 102 ff.

† Thucydides, iv. 104.

later he tells of depression and expectations falsified. He must set out interim judgments, and presently recant them. Yet such imperfect conclusions are themselves historical facts. They represent the opinion of a stage, and that opinion is as much a matter of history as a battle or a State paper. In the present chapter we have to consider a new and unlooked-for phase of the strategic position in sharp contrast to those which preceded it. The first year of war closed in a general obscurity, from which no deduction was possible. With the second the factors seemed to have become clear and static, and the problems to be slowly moving to solution. But at the close of the third year the outlines were blurred again. What had seemed granite rock had crumbled into sand. Accepted metaphors, such as "Germany a beleaguered fortress," were losing their relevance; and postulates, like the Allied command of the sea and the enemy war on two fronts, were clamouring for revision. The third anniversary of the Serajevo tragedy saw a dramatic change in the position of the belligerents.

At the end of June 1916 the Germans in the West had exhausted their capacity for the offensive, and the long Allied battle-line from the North Sea to the Adriatic was about to move forward. While Brussilov was pressing hard in Volhynia and Galicia and the Bukovina, the Battle of the Somme began, and by the close of the year it had effected its main purpose. We have already seen in detail the results of that great fight, which was up to date the most sustained effort of the campaign. It forced the enemy from positions which he thought impregnable, gravely depleted his man-power,

dislocated his staff-work, and disorganized his whole military machine. It compelled him to make superhuman efforts to increase his forces, and to construct a new defensive position to be the bulwark of his French and Belgian occupations. All along the Western front the Allies were successful. At Verdun, before the close of the year, Nivelle, by shattering counterstrokes, had won back what Germany had gained in the spring and summer. Cadorna had taken Gorizia, and had pushed well into the Carso fastnesses. On the Russian front Brussilov, after destroying three Austrian armies, had been stayed before Halicz in September; and during the autumn and early winter von Mackensen and von Falkenhayn had overrun the Dobrudja and Wallachia, taken Bucharest, and driven the Rumanians to the line of the Sereth. But this victory, won against a small and ill-equipped nation, was the solitary success of the Central Powers. On all the main battle-grounds they had been unmistakably beaten in the field.

To the most conservative observer at the beginning of 1917 it seemed almost a matter of mathematical certainty that during that year the Teutonic Alliance must suffer the final military defeat which would mean the end of the war. No larger effort would be required from Russia than Brussilov's attack of 1916; let that be repeated, and the Western Allies would do the rest. The Allied plan was a great combined advance as soon as the weather permitted, for an attack in spring would leave the whole summer and autumn in which to reap the fruits. The enemy must be driven back on his Siegfried Line during the first months of the year,

and then must come the combined blow on the pivots of his last defences. Russia, now well supplied with munitions, would take the field at the first chance, and Cadorna would press forward against Trieste. In the Balkans Sarraill would engage the two Bulgarian armies, and even if he could not break them, he could pin them down and ease Rumania's case. In the East Yudenitch would press south from the Caucasus, and the British armies of Syria and Mesopotamia would press northward, and between them the Turkish forces would be hemmed in and the campaign in that area brought to a decision. On paper the scheme seemed perfect; as far as human intelligence could judge, it was feasible; but in war there may suddenly appear a new and unlooked-for factor which shatters the best-laid plan.

That new factor was the Russian Revolution. In April 1917, when the offensive was due to start, it was still an uncertain quantity, but some consequences were at once apparent. The disorganization of the Russian armies prevented Yudenitch's movement from the Caucasus. It enabled German reinforcements to be sent westward against France and Britain. It gave much-tried Austria a breathing-space, and allowed her to strengthen her Isonzo and Carso fronts. Above all, it introduced uncertainty, which to a strategic plan is as grit in the bearings of a machine. A new vague element had appeared, which, like the addition of some ingredient to a chemical combination, altered subtly and radically all the original components. The great spring offensive miscarried, though many local victories were won. The pivots

of the Siegfried Line were not broken. The contemplated "drive" of the Turkish armies in the East did not succeed. Partly this was due to elements of weakness in the Allied armies, to the comparative failure of Nivelle on the Aisne, and to the confused methods of Sarrail at Salonika. Partly it was due to weather, which is beyond the authority of any General Staff. But the main cause was the increased strength of the enemy caused by the defection of Russia from the battle-line.

Nevertheless, at the close of June 1917, the position of the Allies was strong and hopeful. During the preceding year France and Britain had captured from the German armies 165,000 rank and file, 3,500 officers, nearly a thousand guns, and some 3,000 lesser pieces. They had won almost all the chief observation posts of the enemy in the West—the Bapaume Ridge, the Chemin des Dames, the Moronvilliers hills, Vimy, and Messines. Since the blow on the Siegfried pivots had failed, Sir Douglas Haig was making ready another plan, and by his victory at Messines on 7th June had cleared his flanks for the new movement. Italy had won substantial victories on the Isonzo heights and on the Carso. Though the Balkan attack had miscarried, Venizelos was now in power in Greece, and the danger to the rear of the Salonika army had gone. Sir Archibald Murray had been checked at Gaza, but Sir Stanley Maude had taken Bagdad, and had pushed his front well to the north and east of the city. America had entered the war, and was preparing with all her might to play an adequate part. Finally, there were rumours that Russia was about to take the offensive; and those who did

not realize the complete chaos of that country talked wisely of what might be accomplished by a revolutionary army, where each soldier fought under the inspiration of the new wine of liberty.

The situation had, therefore, many hopeful aspects; but to the careful student it seemed that that hope did not rest on reasoned calculations. The harsh fact was that the great plan of 1917, of which the Somme and indeed all the Allied fighting and preparation since 1915 had been the logical preliminaries, had proved impossible. New plans could be made, but they would not be the same. For the elements were no longer calculable. By the failure of one great partner the old military cohesion of the Alliance had gone. Much might still be hoped for from Russia, but nothing could be taken for granted. The beleaguering forces which had sat for three years round the German citadel were wavering and straggling on the East. The war on two fronts, which had been Germany's great handicap, looked as if it might change presently to a war on a single front. Whatever victories might be won during the remainder of 1917, it was now clear that the decisive blow could not be delivered. The Teutonic Alliance, just when it was beginning to crumble, had been given a new tenure of life.

The year had been fruitful in tactical developments, mainly on the Allied side. The Somme saw the principle of limited objectives first put methodically into practice—a principle which led to brilliant success at the winter battles of Verdun, at Arras, and most notably at Messines, and in re-

gard to which Nivelles's attack at the Aisne was the exception that proved the rule. It saw, too, the most valuable advance in artillery tactics during the war—the Allied device of the "creeping barrage." On the enemy side the chief novelty was the use of "shock troops" for the counter-attack. In the main battle area he had been continuously on the defensive, and his method had been to hold his front line lightly, and rely on a massed counter-attack before the offensive had secured its ground. This was for the normal sector, but on the Siegfried Line he trusted to the immense strength of his positions and his endless well-placed machine guns to prevent any loss of ground. Neither mode of defence wholly succeeded. By the end of June he had already lost seven miles of the Siegfried Line; and in the rest of the battlefield he had, with the solitary exception of Fresnoy, failed to win back any ground by his counter-attacks. But this is not to say that his tactics were not the best possible in the circumstances. He was playing for time, husbanding his man-power, and dragging out the contest till his submarine campaign should bring Britain to her knees. He was successful in so far that he was able to stave off a decisive blow, and he was busy perfecting other devices which were to give us serious food for thought later in the year. The defensive of the German High Command was no supine or unintelligent thing.

On one side the enemy showed remarkable energy. Before the close of the Somme he had realized his weakness in the air, and had appointed General von Hoepfner, the Chief of Staff of Otto von Below's Sixth Army, to control all his flying service.

The result was a striking advance in effectiveness. Before Arras, indeed, he was beaten from the field, but only at the cost of a heavy Allied sacrifice. Von Hoeppner perfected new types of battle planes, notably the two Albatrosses ; he was the chief promoter of the Gotha bomb-carrier, which was soon to become a familiar name in England ; he vastly improved the *personnel* of the service ; he concentrated on the production of high-powered engines ; and he greatly increased the output of the standardized factories. The command of the air, as has often been pointed out in these pages, could never be an absolute thing. On the whole, the Allies had the superiority ; but there were long spells when the battle was drawn, and at moments the honours seemed to be on the other side. It was a ceaseless struggle both for the airmen at the front and for the factories at home, and a single error in foresight or a single strike of workmen might incline the wavering balance against the side responsible for it.

But developments in tactics and *matériel* were of secondary importance compared with the great question of man-power. We have seen the difficulties of the Central Powers up to the spring of 1917, when the Russian Revolution gave them a new lease of life. All the combatants were suffering from the depletion of their ranks. France had reached her maximum at an earlier stage, and was naturally anxious to conserve her remaining resources. She was holding roughly two-thirds of the Western front ; but as the main operations were in the British section, the enemy's strength per mile against the latter was more than double his strength per mile against the French. Generally speaking, in

the West the two Allied forces were of about equal strength, and it was clear that a further increase could only come from Britain, whose exhaustion was conspicuously less than that of her neighbour.

But for Britain the problem of reserves was far from easy, for she could not give undivided attention to the question of men for the front, since she was the chief munitioner of all the Allies. She had some two and a quarter million men engaged in shipbuilding, munitions, and kindred work; she had well over five millions under arms, of whom nearly three and a quarter millions were in expeditionary forces, and of these nearly two and a quarter millions in France and Flanders. Her losses had not been on the French scale, but her non-combatant commitments were far greater. Hence for her the balance must be most delicately hung. More men must be got to face the German divisions released from the East, for each month of the war had made it clearer that no decision could be won without a crushing numerical superiority. Moreover, these men must be ready in time, so that they could be fully trained before entering the line; for every dispatch of Sir Douglas Haig insisted upon the folly of flinging raw troops into a modern battle. But the reinforcements came slowly. In the spring of 1917 Sir William Robertson, in a public speech, asked for half a million new levies by July. He did not get them, for the conflicting claims could not be balanced. The country passed through acute phases of opinion, in which the building of new tonnage, the production of food supplies at home, the construction of a vast aeroplane programme, seemed successively the major needs. But vital as these were, the great

permanent demand was men for the fighting line. As Sir William Robertson said truly, it was idle to put a limit to the number of men needed for the army. Everybody was needed who could conceivably be spared from vital industries. For without a great preponderance of numbers on the front the most ample munitionment carried by the most impregnable mercantile navy could not give us victory.

It was to this problem especially that America's entry into the war seemed to provide an answer. We have not yet reached the stage when it is necessary to describe in detail the war measures of the great Western Republic. They were instant and comprehensive. From the day of the declaration of war America flung herself whole-heartedly into the work of preparation. Her resources were enormous, for within a few years it was calculated that she could put fifteen millions of men into the fighting line and provide some hundreds of thousand millions sterling of money. But she had to do the things which her Allies had done two years earlier, and at this stage of the contest, if her assistance was to be effective, it must be furiously speeded up. America's effort must be made against time. Her first step was to introduce compulsory service under a system of selective conscription. The measure was passed by Congress on 28th April, *April 28.* and in five months a million and a half soldiers were in training. The regular army was brought up to its full strength of 400,000 by voluntary enlistment; the National Guard was brought up to half a million; the ballot for conscripts gave some 700,000. Vast camps sprang up throughout

the country like mushrooms in a night. Lord Northcliffe has described one such training ground :—

“ Early in July there lay, three miles outside San Antonio in Texas, a stretch of ground covered with a difficult kind of scrub or bush. On 6th July there appeared an army of between 9,000 and 10,000 workmen of every known nationality, directed by young Americans of the Harvard and Yale type. The 10,000 arrived in every kind of conveyance—in mule carts, farm wagons, horse cabs, motors, and huge motor vans. At the end of the day's work, when the whistle was blown, the scene resembled that of some eccentric, elaborately staged cinematograph film. Together with the army of 10,000 men came every kind of sets of automatic machinery. In this new town outside San Antonio 12 miles of rail, 25 miles of road, 31 miles of water-pipes, 30 miles of sewer were accomplished in forty-five days. . . . Nearly all material had to be brought from what appear to us vast distances. As often as not the thermometer stood at 100 degrees; yet the daily photographs taken by the contractors show that progress was continuous until, on 25th August, a considerable part of the city was ready for occupation. The strongly and comfortably built huts are all provided with heating arrangements for the winter, and baths, hot and cold, are attached to each building. There are vast stores and office-blocks, several post offices, a huge bakery, laundry, stables for 1,300 horses and mules, hospitals, schools—in all between 1,200 and 1,300 buildings. And what has been done in Texas is being done simultaneously in fifteen other parts of the country.”

The mobilization of America for war was hurried on in all other branches of national effort. More than 20,000 million dollars was voted, of which 7,000 millions were loans to America's Allies. The immense sum of £128,000,000 was set aside for aeroplane contracts. A huge programme of merchant shipbuilding was entered upon. The President was given power to assist the Allied blockade

by putting an embargo on certain exports to neutral countries, and he did not let the weapon rust. Controllers of food and the other chief commodities were appointed, as in Britain. Treason and espionage were put down with that high hand which can only be used by a democracy sure of itself.

Monday, 25th June, was an eventful day, for it saw the landing of the first units of American troops in France. They were only forerunners, *June 25.* to prepare the way for those who should follow; for there were few troops as yet available for the field, and the small regular army had to be distributed as stiffening among the new divisions. The American Commander-in-Chief was Major-General Pershing, who had been a conspicuous figure in the Spanish and Mexican Wars—a man still in early middle life, with many years of practical campaigning behind him. The old American army had been small, but its officers had followed the life for the love of it, and were to a high degree professional experts. For its size, the staff was probably equal to any in the world. Those who watched the first American soldiers on the continent of Europe—grave young men, with lean, shaven faces, a quick, springy walk, and a superb bodily fitness—found their memories returning to Gettysburg and the Wilderness, where the same stock had shown an endurance and heroism not surpassed in human history. And they were disposed to agree with the observer who remarked that it had taken a long time to get America into the war, but that it would take much longer to get her out.

The year in naval warfare had been inconspicuous so far as above-water actions were concerned. The essay of Jutland was not repeated. The battle-ships and the battle cruisers lay idle in harbour, or patrolled seas where there was no sign of the enemy. There was, indeed, much sporadic raiding. During the first months of 1917 the *Seeadler* repeated in the South Atlantic the exploits of the *Moewe* the previous year. We have seen the forays of German destroyers in the Dover Straits in November 1916. All through the first months of 1917 the German flotillas from Zeebrugge and Ostend were busy about the British shores. On 22nd Jan-

Jan. 22. uary Commander Tyrwhitt's forces met an enemy destroyer division off the Dutch coast—sank one vessel and scattered the rest. Then followed a series of German raids on the Kent and Suffolk coasts, and the bombardment of the much-tried little seaport towns. In April the British counter-attacked with some success, and in a brilliant action off Dover, on the night of 20th April,

April 20. the *Broke*, commanded by Commander Evans, the Antarctic explorer, and the *Swift*, Commander Peck, engaged five or six vessels, and sank at least two of them. The fight of the *Broke* was memorable because she rammed a German destroyer, and repelled boarders in the old style with

June 5. fist and bayonet. On 5th June the Dover patrol bombarded Ostend so effectually as to destroy most of the workshops and make the harbour untenable; while Commander Tyrwhitt's Harwich flotilla engaged six destroyers—sank one and severely damaged another.

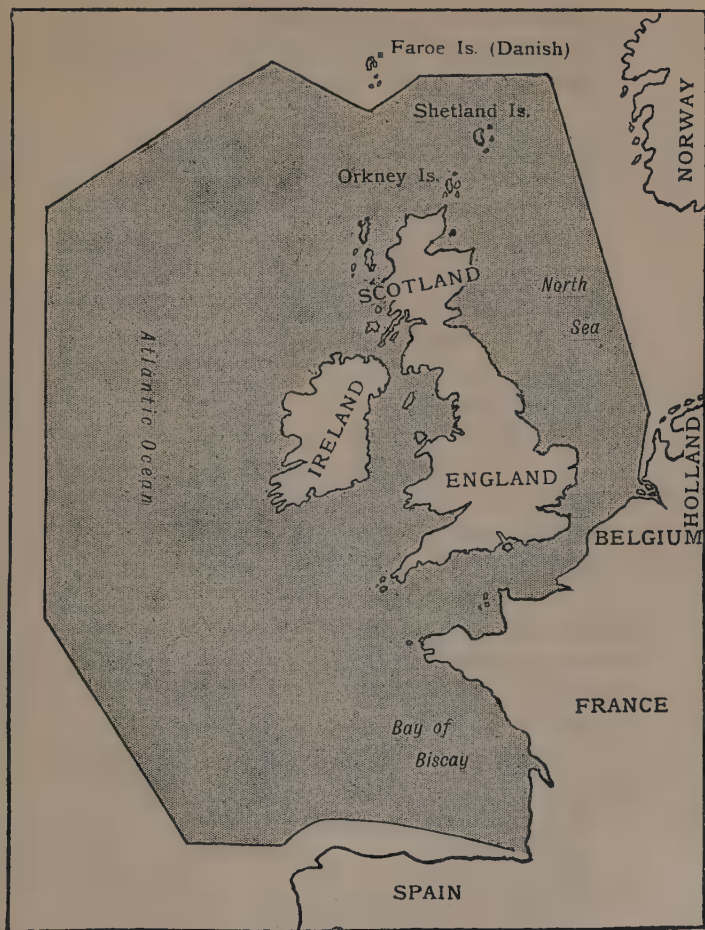
It was very clear that these Belgian bases were

a perpetual menace to our shores and to the safety of the Allied trade. Not only did they serve as the home of the aircraft which were beginning to make bold assaults upon England, but they were the source of the raiding flotillas and the harbour of all the smaller submarines. The mind of the High Command in the field was more and more turning towards the smoking out of this nest of mischief by a land attack, as at once the best offensive and defensive possible. Some words of Sir John Jellicoe's at this time foreshadowed a policy which was soon to result in the Third Battle of Ypres. "The Germans," he said, "have applied to this length of sand-fringed coast the same principle of intensive fortifications adopted higher up on the North Sea and the island of Heligoland. The coast-line is studded with heavy guns, which in themselves constitute infinitesimal targets at a range of over 20,000 yards on which any bombardment could be carried out. Moreover, the enemy has not been slow to make the fullest use of aircraft and smoke screens by way of protection. Ostend offers the best target; but it can only be attacked at rare intervals, when a favourable combination of wind, weather, and sea conditions can be attained. Zeebrugge, in the wide sense of the word, is not a naval base, but merely an exit from the inland port of Bruges, with which it is connected by a wide deep-water canal. There is little to hit at Zeebrugge. Still, I hope that the problem which the Belgian coast presents is not insoluble."

But if the year was barren of fleet actions, it was none the less destined to form an epoch in naval history, for the early weeks of 1917 saw the sub-

marine become the most potent single weapon of war. We have seen in earlier chapters how, during the summer and autumn of 1916, the range of the German under-water craft had been extended and their numbers largely increased. On February 1, 1917, Germany's campaign of unlimited submarine warfare began. Hitherto she had been restrained, not by considerations of decency or of international law, but solely by the fear of bringing America into the contest. Now, largely as the result of the Somme, she had made up her mind that at all costs she must deal a final blow to her main enemy if she were to avoid a general defeat. She believed that the economic condition of Britain was very grave, and that by a mighty effort she might force starvation upon that people, cripple their military effort, and bring them to their senses. She had reasoned out the matter carefully, and was confident of her conclusions. She ran a desperate risk, but the stakes were worth it. America might declare war; but that price would not be too high to pay for the destruction of Britain as a fighting force, and perhaps as a coherent state. Beyond doubt, when the German Government yielded to the policy of von Tirpitz and von Reventlow, it was because they believed that they were gambling on a certainty.

On 31st January Germany announced the danger zone to the world. All the waters in a wide radius round Britain, France, and Italy, as well as in the Eastern Mediterranean, were declared to be blockaded areas. A narrow lane was left for shipping to Greece. The ensuing campaign was waged in deadly earnest. The weekly tables which the British Admiralty issued as from 25th



The Submarine "Blockade"—the "barred region" in the North Sea and the Atlantic proclaimed by Germany.

February showed a heavy and growing loss of British and Allied tonnage. During the month of

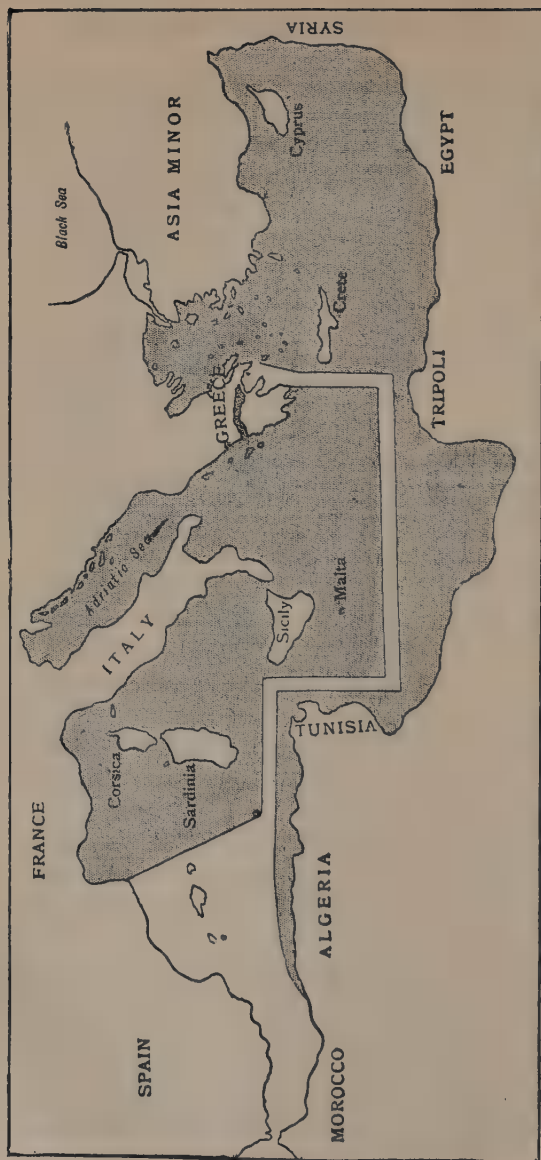
April we lost some 550,000 tons gross of shipping, and there were those who, looking at the brilliant Arras offensive, declared that the problem for Germany was to defeat Britain at sea before the British army could win on land. After April the wastage slowly declined, so that in July the gross

Feb. 21. tonnage lost was only 320,000. On 21st February Admiral von Capelle told the Reichstag that the expectations attached to the U-boat campaign by the German people had been fully justified by results. The end of April was popularly fixed as the limit of British endurance under this new attack; then it was postponed to August; but May passed and August came, and there was no sign of yielding. To that extent Germany's gamble failed. It brought in America against her, but it was very far from forcing Britain to sue for peace. The military stores carried overseas to the fighting fronts were in September, 1917, more than twice what they had been in January.

Nevertheless, the situation was sufficiently grave. From the beginning of the war till February 1, 1917, we had lost some four and a half million tons to the enemy; we lost approximately that amount in the first seven months of the new submarine warfare. At that rate the Allied tonnage would presently be reduced to a point which would forbid not only the decent provisioning of the civilian peoples at home, but the full maintenance of the armies at the fighting fronts. To meet the menace, five lines of policy must be pursued concurrently. All unnecessary imports from overseas must be firmly checked. Home production, both of food and raw materials such as ores and timber, must be immensely

increased. New tonnage must be built, or borrowed where it could be had. Existing merchant shipping must be protected as far as possible by escorts and by the organization of convoys. Finally, a truceless war must be waged against the U-boats, in the hope that the point would be reached when we could sink them faster than Germany could build them.

British statesmen made earnest appeals to their countrymen, and met with a willing response. By the early summer of 1917 Great Britain had grown into one vast market garden, and every type of citizen had become an amateur food-producer. There were periodic shortages of certain articles of diet, and the supply of certain imported materials, such as pulp for paper-making, steadily declined. But on the whole the British people showed an adaptability in the crisis with which their best friends had scarcely credited them. The shipbuilding programmes were enlarged and speeded up. During peace time Britain had produced some two millions of new tonnage a year. In 1915 this figure fell to 688,000; in 1916 to 538,000. During the first six months of 1917 the tonnage built was 484,000, and in his speech of 16th August the Prime Minister told the House of Commons that the total new tonnage built at home and acquired from abroad during the year would be 1,900,000. When we consider that this was almost the amount of peace construction, and reflect on the depletion and diversion of British man-power, the achievement must seem highly creditable. The convoy system was successful, and in the Atlantic presently gave good results. As for our offensive against the submarine,



The Submarine "Blockade"—the "barred region" in the Mediterranean proclaimed by Germany and the line of approach to Greece allowed to neutrals.

it proceeded slowly but surely, by a multitude of devices the tale of which cannot yet be told. Our system of naval intelligence was perfected, and our aircraft became deadly weapons both for the detection and destruction of the German craft. The enemy losses increased slightly during the first quarter of the year; during the second quarter they rose more sharply; and after June the curve mounted steeply. It must be realized that our problem both of defence and offence was far more difficult than when submarine attacks were confined to the Narrow Seas. It was possible to defend our channels and estuaries by a dozen methods which could not be used against craft operating in the wide ocean.

The main problem for the Allies during the first year of war was men for the field; it was munitions during the second, and tonnage in the third. The only enemy offensive was now on the sea. This problem affected all the Allies; but it bore most heavily on Britain, partly because of her large necessary import trade, partly because of her position as universal provider. It was beyond her power to solve it by the immediate creation of new tonnage to replace losses, since, in building up her armies and munition factories, she had drawn too largely on her strength for any large effort in a new direction. The solution lay with America, and in a special degree it was America's contribution to the campaign. It was Germany's submarine policy which had brought the United States into the struggle, and the daily record of cold-blooded barbarities was the most potent appeal to her citizens to wage war in earnest. Germany conducted her

campaign without pity, and the torpedoing of hospital ships like the *Gloucester Castle*, the *Dover Castle*, the *Lanfranc*, and the *Donegal* did more, perhaps, to rouse American feeling than the not less barbarous treatment of humble merchantmen. From the beginning America realized her responsibility in this matter, but she had a long way to go before she could carry policy into deeds. There was much fumbling over the question at the start, and some needless delay in the first stages of preparation. If she could produce six million tons of new shipping a year the problem was solved, even if there was no decline in the scale of German successes. The task was well within her power, for it required only a tenth of her annual output of steel and a mere fraction of her great labour reserves. It was in a peculiar degree her own problem, for unless she provided the ships her armies could never make war in Europe. Without the new tonnage her admirable military activity was merely beating the air.

Meantime the Navy was the first part of America's fighting force to take the field beside her Allies. In May a flotilla of American destroyers under Vice-Admiral W. G. Sims arrived in British waters, and assisted in the protection of the Atlantic trade. The vessels were admirable in construction, and their officers and crews were true seamen, who earned at once the respect of their British colleagues. In June, when Admiral Bayly, commanding on the Irish coast, went on leave, Admiral Sims took his place, and the Stars and Stripes floated for the first time in history from a British headquarters.

It was not to be expected that the new and

startling developments of naval war should leave the administration of the British Admiralty unchanged. We have seen that by the close of 1916 Sir Edward Carson had become First Lord, and Sir John Jellicoe First Sea Lord. Presently Sir Eric Geddes, the Director-General of Military Transportation, was brought in as Controller of the Navy—the revival of an historic office which gave him the supervision of new construction. In June there was a further readjustment, and in July Sir Edward Carson entered the War Cabinet as Minister without portfolio, and Sir Eric Geddes succeeded him as First Lord. The functions of the Board of Admiralty were divided into “operations” and “maintenance,” and the members were grouped into two committees accordingly. The operations committee was made up of the First Sea Lord and those officers responsible for the details of strategy; the maintenance committee consisted of the officers responsible for *personnel*, *matériel*, supplies, construction, and finance. The effect of the change was threefold. It brought into Admiralty administration men from the fleets who had recent fighting experience and were still young. It separated the two functions of Command and Supply, which required different talents and training. Above all, it made possible a real Naval Staff, a thinking department which had laid upon it the duty of deducing the logical lessons from the new facts of sea warfare, and working out future plans on a basis of accurate knowledge. All naval theory had gone into the melting pot, and the creeds of 1914 had to be drastically revised. It stood to reason that the younger men, who had themselves been forced

to grapple in bitter earnest with the new imperious needs, should be largely used to frame the tactics and strategy of reply.

The most significant events of the year had been in the sphere of politics. France and Italy had not changed conspicuously the *personnel* of their civil Governments, save that in March M. Ribot succeeded M. Briand in France as Prime Minister. In Germany, in June 1917 von Bethmann-Hollweg still held the reins of power. But in Britain a radically new Government had appeared, and in Russia a new world. Everywhere the atmosphere had become different. The half-forgotten general purposes and the immediate strategical aims, which had filled men's minds in the early years of war, were giving place to a craving for first principles, and, on Germany's part, to a tortuous diplomacy based on this new instinct. The movement had begun with the Emperor's offer of peace terms in December 1916; for though the offer had been summarily rejected by the Allies, it had set a ferment working in the mind of all the world. The tremendous events of the spring in Petrograd and the entry of America into the struggle changed the outlook of every belligerent people. Henceforth not the methods but the aims of the war became the common subject of speculation and controversy. Offensives ceased to be military only, and became political, and the idealist and the ideologue emerged from their closets.

The development was a salutary one, and, as we shall see, it had an immense and immediate effect upon every phase of the campaign. It both cleared and narrowed the issues between the combatants.

The Allies had entered on the campaign with a very simple and honourable conception of the goal they strove for, but by the spring of 1917 all had grown a little hazy as to their precise objective. Each of them had one primary aim—to crush finally, not the German people or the German state, but that evil thing which had become dominant there, and that made the world unsafe for peace or liberty. Once that thing was crushed, there was little need for talk about guarantees, for the main peril would have gone. Until it was crushed no guarantee which the wit of man could devise would safeguard civilization. But there were a number of secondary purposes which each of the Allies held, and which they were apt to talk of as conditions of peace. In such purposes were not included the relinquishment by Germany of the territories occupied, and the restitution of Belgium and Serbia. These were not terms of peace, but the necessary pre-conditions without which no discussion of peace was possible. By secondary purposes were meant the various territorial adjustments spoken of in connection with France and Italy, and such matters as the much-canvassed economic restrictions on the Central Powers. These were not primary aims ; they were matters of machinery which were of value only in so far as they gave effect to the primary aim. It was possible to be convinced on the main issue, and yet to be doubtful about the merit of more than one of the secondary aims. The latter were for the most part safeguards and guarantees, and if the primary aim were forgotten and negotiations were attempted on their basis, then the most rigid and excessive guarantees must be sought to give security. But

if the primary aim was accomplished, all the secondary aims took a new complexion.

There was some perception of this truth in two phrases which were variously interpreted—the demand of the Russian Revolutionaries for “no indemnities and no annexations,” and President Wilson’s famous phrase, “Peace without victory.” The Allies’ object in the war was to make a world where law, not force, should rule, and where the smallest people should be secure in peace and freedom. It was not to redistribute territory, except in so far as that was necessary to the main end. Every secondary aim must therefore be tested by the main purpose. “Peace without victory” was a true formula, if by it was meant that the Allies did not want a victory which would leave a lasting sense of bitterness and injustice, and so defeat their chief aim. “No annexations or indemnities” was also a just formula, if annexations were considered as a spoil of conquest and not as contributing to the main purpose. But in another sense no peace could come without victory—final victory over a perverted Prussianism; and annexations and indemnities might be essential if they were a logical part of the general purpose of pacification.

Now, America had entered into the war without any interest in secondary aims. From her detached position she saw the struggle only in its broadest lines. She did not miss the wood behind the trees. She knew that the question was not whether this or that territorial change should be made, but that the mischief should be rooted out of Germany and the world. To say that France fought for Alsace-Lorraine and Italy for Trieste and the Trentino, or

Britain for the safety of India, was to adopt a formula too narrow for the facts. America's appearance compelled all the Allies to revise their notions and return to the first things. It helped them to distinguish between method and purpose, between machinery and design. To concentrate upon secondary aims could lead only to disputes. It was the duty of the whole Alliance to test everything by a single question: Would it help towards that lasting peace and that cleaner and better world which they fought to create?

Moreover, America emphasized and brought into the foreground the greatest of all the methods for the realization of the Allied purpose. There were many at the time who were inclined to dismiss all questions of a League of Nations and an international peace-making authority as academic and irrelevant. This was not the view of President Wilson and the American people, nor was it the view of the Allied leaders. If there was any horizon beyond the battle-smoke, the question of international right and an adequate machinery to enforce it was the most fundamental which the Allies could consider. It was far more practical than discussions about where certain new border-lines should run—questions which at this stage of the war no one had the data to settle. To belittle the importance of what was coming to be called "internationalism" was to obscure one of the most vital aspects of the common purpose. No speech of the year so moved the British nation as that delivered by General Smuts in May at the dinner given in his honour by both Houses of Parliament, when he expounded the doctrine of the British Empire as historically

the first instalment of a greater League—"the only system in history in which a large number of nations has been living in unity."

But with the true internationalism came the false—the fanatical creed which would have destroyed all the loyalties and sanctions of patriotism, and put in their place a materialistic absorption in class interests. War, which with most men intensifies local affection and national devotion, has with those of a certain type the effect of dissipating the homely intimacies of race and country and substituting for them a creed of class selfishness and dogmatic abstractions. Such men are the intellectual outlaws of society. They may be honest, able, and brave, but they are inhuman; and though they can destroy they can never build, for enduring institutions must be founded on human nature. Nevertheless in the long strain of war there come moments when such dogmas have a fatal appeal, and in the first half of 1917 they gained ground among the *déracinés* of all countries. They spread like wild-fire in Russia, where they found conditions naturally favourable; they were preached by the remnants of the old *Internationale* in Switzerland, Holland, and Scandinavia; they were welcomed by the left wing of French Socialism, and by the same group in Italy; while in Britain they found adherents in the Independent Labour Party, as well as among the handful of professional wreckers who are always found in any great industrial society. The true internationalism includes nationalism, and provides a safeguard for nationalities. These men were the foes of all national units; and since the war was fought largely for the sake of nationalism, they were,

consciously or unconsciously, the opponents of the war. They tended always to become apologists for Germany, and spiritually they had more kinship with the unfeared universalism of German autocracy than with the rich and varied liberties of Western civilization.

It was necessary for all the belligerents to take account of this new attitude of mind. The Allies were gradually compelled to emphasize the true internationalism of their aims, though their statesmen were slow in recognizing the necessity. Germany after her fashion, as we shall see later, turned the movement to her own purpose. Meantime, in his Glasgow speech of 29th June, the British Prime Minister, following President Wilson, put the issue in a new form. The menace of Prussianism could be got rid of in two ways—either by a crushing field victory, or by the revolt of the German people themselves against the false gods which they had worshipped. In both cases the result would be the same—the degradation of a heresy in the eyes of those who had pinned their faith to it. “We shall enter,” said Mr. Lloyd George, “into negotiations with a free Government in Germany with a different attitude of mind, a different temper, a different spirit, with less suspicion, with more confidence, than we should with a sort which we knew to be dominated by the aggressive and arrogant spirit of Prussian militarism. The Allied Governments would, in my judgment, be acting wisely if they drew that distinction in their general attitude towards the discussion of the terms of peace.” Such an appeal was clearly on delicate ground. If unwisely phrased, it might appear to

be an interference with the domestic concerns of Germany, which would rally her people to a more vigorous resistance. But beyond doubt, as delivered, it met with a response from certain powerful elements among the Central Powers; and, as we shall see in a later chapter, their political tactics were directed towards a democratization of their government which should have the maximum of show and the minimum of substance, and the preaching of a version of internationalism which came easy to men who had no regard for any nationalism but their own.

In June 1917, at the end of the third year of war, the attitude of the Central Powers—or, more correctly, that of Germany, their master—towards war aims showed little of the unanimity which had marked it during the earlier stages of the campaign. So far Germany had made no explicit statement of her demands. In his speech to the Reichstag on

May 15. 15th May the Imperial Chancellor declined to disclose his peace terms. In the absence of official evidence, Germany's war aims could only be gathered from the utterances of her press and public men, and they tended to wide divergency among themselves. But on one point it may be said that all were unanimous. Any settlement must recognize that the Central Powers had not been defeated. There must be no net loss in territory or revenues as compared with the position in August 1914. On this matter the issue with the Allies was abundantly clear.

The great majority of the German people would have put it otherwise. They claimed that Germany had been victorious, and that peace must bring to

her a net gain. Only the Minority Socialists and a small section of the Majority were prepared as yet to accept a peace on the *status quo ante* basis. There was great difference of opinion as to what the gains should be, and the difference was determined by the various views held of Germany's true interests. We may distinguish five main war aims. In the first two years of war most Germans had held all the five, but after Verdun and the Somme had taught moderation the various schools were inclined to concentrate on one of the batch. The first, which was the creed of the Pan-Germans and the extreme annexationists, included the "freedom of the seas"—by which they meant the increase of German sea-power to a level with Britain's; the annexation of the Belgian coast as well as of sundry French Channel ports; the annexation of the Briey mining district and frontier fortresses like Longwy. The second was the Mittel-Europa school of Naumann, which sought the creation of a Central European *bloc* of states, militarily, politically, and economically united. The third, led chiefly by Paul Rohrbach, had for its chief aim the control of the Ottoman Empire and the extension of Germany's sphere of influence to the Persian Gulf. The fourth, inspired by Delbrück and Solf, preached a German colonial empire, especially in Africa. The fifth demanded large annexations of Russian soil in Courland and Lithuania, so that by agricultural settlement there should be an expansion not only of German power but of the German people.

Few now held all five aims, though many combined several in their creeds. The Pan-German was critical of Mittel-Europa, and men like Delbrück

were strongly opposed to annexation in the West. But all, even the most modest, sought some solid net gain for Germany, and were thus in hopeless conflict with the views of the Allies. All, too—even the most extravagant—were encouraged by the German Government with a view to a margin for future bargaining. Nevertheless there was serious disquiet even among those who planned out most generously the scheme of Germany's gains. To the military chiefs, von Hindenburg and von Ludendorff, the *débâcle* of Russia had come as a godsend to help them to resist the deadly pressure in the West. It enabled them to think once again in terms of the offensive, and they still looked to the submarine campaign to weaken Britain's effort and to strangle America's at birth. But the ferment in the East was not without its perils. The disease of revolution might spread into their own decorous sheepfold, and against the wild intangible forces let loose in Russia no military science could strive. The "shining sword" could not do battle with phantoms. Hence they were compelled to admit new factors into their problem, and grapple with data abhorrent to their orderly minds.

Two main schools of thought remained distinct among the rulers of Germany. The military chiefs and the fanatics of Pan-Germanism still believed that a little more endurance, a little more sacrifice, would bring the Allies to their knees, and enable Germany to secure gains which would make all her losses worth while, and ensure her future on the grandiose lines which they had planned. The other, the *politiques*, urged that a stalemate had come, and that the balance should now be struck.

For against the German war map they saw the solid economic advantages which the Allies possessed, both for the present and for the future. The spectre of post-bellum conditions haunted their minds. Unless she could barter her territorial occupations for economic assistance, Germany might have her hands far over Europe and Asia, and yet be dying at the heart.

The economic position of all the belligerents had become grave by the end of the third year of war. By July 1917 Britain had spent well over 5,000 millions, of which more than one-third was raised by taxes, and two-thirds by the proceeds of loans. It was a colossal indebtedness which faced her, and it had been incurred not wholly on her own account, for over a thousand millions were loans to her Allies, and about 160 millions loans to her own Dominions. She carried on her back the financial burden of her European confederates, and with it all her credit was unweakened, and the elasticity of her revenue-producing power undiminished. New taxes habitually produced far more than their budget estimates, and alone among the European belligerents she remained on a gold basis. She was spending now at a rate of close upon seven millions a day ; but as the figure included her advances to Allies, the daily cost of the war was rather less than the four and a half millions spent by Germany. In one respect Britain differed from her colleagues and opponents. Germany financed the war almost wholly by loans ; France, till the end of 1916, had practically imposed no new taxes ; while Britain had trebled her taxation, so that on an aver-

age every man, woman, and child within her borders contributed three shillings a day towards the cost of the campaigns. The immediate difficulty of foreign purchases had been solved by America's appearance as an ally, and it might fairly be claimed that, for a country approaching the fourth year of a world-wide war, Britain was in a state of reasonable financial health. France was in a similar state; Italy was being "carried" by her neighbours; and the resources of America were good for another decade.

The Central Powers were in a simpler though far less sound position. Germany, who "carried" the others, had a huge debt, already above 6,000 millions, and increasing at the rate of two billions a year. To pay interest upon it in full would consume the entire surplus production of her people in peace. At present she was paying it out of further borrowings. She had merged the two structures of private and public credit, and peace without indemnities would lead inevitably to the utter downfall of both, and the reduction of her Government bonds to the position of the paper of a defaulting South American republic. Before the war her citizens groaned under a budget of 160 millions; peace without indemnities would compel them to raise 400 millions for the payment of interest alone. To find a solution would be a giant's task, but for the present it did not trouble her. Victory would solve the problem, and defeat in any case would spell bankruptcy. She had staked everything on the war, and awaited the issue with a gambler's fortitude.

For the actual conduct of operations the finan-

cial position of a country is the less important, provided money can be obtained by one device or another. But the economic position, which may be influenced, indeed, by unsound finance in the direction of inflated prices, is a matter of the most urgent gravity. The submarine campaign, as we have seen, was a serious blow to the economic strength of all the Allies. It was serious, but not crushing; it complicated every question of supply, but it did not make them insoluble. The pressure was most severe on Italy, who was a heavy importer of grain and coal, and found herself crippled in her war industries, and faced with an awkward problem for the coming winter. Among the Central Powers the situation was far worse. Turkey had long been suffering from naked famine. Bulgaria was on very short commons. In Austria there were starvation in Istria, Bosnia, and German Bohemia, and all-night queues in the cities for the bare necessities of life. The milk supply of Vienna had dropped to a sixth, and the output of beer to one-sixteenth. In Germany the food supply was better than it had been the year before, for the stocks were far better administered; but its quality was poor, and there was an immense amount of gastric disease everywhere throughout the country. The clothing of the people had gone to pieces, and the footgear had become anything from sabots to dancing-pumps. But the most serious fact was the lack of machinery. Every scrap available was used for war purposes, and the little left in private hands could not be renewed, or even kept in order, because of the lack of lubricants. For the same reason transportation was in an evil case. The rolling stock was falling into dis-

repair, and the permanent ways could not be properly cared for owing to the scarcity of labour and material. The result was that even military traffic suffered. At one time it had taken six days to move a division from East to West ; it now took nearer a fortnight.

All this made for intense discomfort, and a consequent lowering of spirits. But the main inducement to depression was the doubt as to what would be Germany's fate after the war, whatever the issue. Nothing short of an overwhelming victory would give salvation ; and this was clearly impossible, except in the minds of a few dreamers. She had a vast paper issue ; but she could do nothing with it, for it was not accepted beyond her borders. She was very much in the position of the ancient Greek city state which could play any pranks it liked with its currency at home but had nothing valid for foreign exchange. But she had considerable stocks of manufactured goods, and she had a fair gold reserve. With these she hoped to pay for the imports necessary to restart her industrial life. They might suffice, or they might not, for her requirements in the way of imports would be stupendous. Moreover, the Allies controlled all the world's producing grounds of raw material, without which she must be speedily bankrupt. She could not force them to share ; and they might well refuse to share, for they had their own stocks to build up. Economically she was at their mercy ; and, to those in Germany who faced this fact squarely, all talk of the " war map " and shining swords must have seemed foolish bluster. Her deeds had made her a blackleg in the trade union of nations, since she had defied the law of the com-

mon interest. She had arrayed against her a world which could in the long run starve her to death.

To those of Germany's citizens who were pre-occupied with such perplexed forecasts the results of her unrestricted submarine campaign must have foreboded ill. For more than one neutral followed the example of the United States, and declared war or broke off relations. Every month brought news of some new recruit to the ranks of her enemies. In March it was China ; in April it was Cuba and Panama ; and by the autumn of 1917, of the South American states only the Argentine and Chile had not declared against her. Eighteen countries had proclaimed war, and nine more had severed diplomatic connections. It was the verdict of the civilized world on the wrongdoer, and—more important for Germany—it was the verdict of those countries which between them possessed the monopoly of the raw materials without which she could not live.

The European neutrals were in a position of growing embarrassment and discomfort. Scandinavia lost heavily in ships from the German submarines, and its trade was grievously crippled. Food conditions were worse, perhaps, in Sweden, Holland, and Switzerland, than among any of the belligerent Allies. Spain for a moment seemed about to break with the Central Powers ; but the strong Germanophil elements among her people compelled her Government to pocket its pride. The Allied blockade, owing to America's action, was enormously tightened, for President Wilson's decree of 9th June prohibited the export without special Government licence of any article or commodity which could conceivably be of use to the

enemy. The main difficulty which had always confronted the British blockade policy was the necessity of considering American interests, and that handicap was now removed. The Chancelleries of Europe, during the summer of 1917, were filled with the complaints of helpless neutrals; and history may well pity the fate of those small nations thus ground between the upper and the nether millstones.

The outlook for the Allies at the close of June 1917 had not the hope of the previous midsummer, or the apparent assurance of the beginning of the year. The sky had suddenly become mysteriously clouded. Wherever the Allies in the West had attacked the enemy they had beaten him soundly; but the final victory in the field, which was theirs by right, seemed to be slipping from their grasp owing to the defection of Russia. Britain's mastery of the sea, too, seemed in danger of failing her at the most vital moment owing to the new campaign under water—a campaign with which by June she had got on terms, but which she had not succeeded in checking. In that obviously lay the crisis of the war. Unless it could be reduced within limits, everything—the military efficiency of the Allied armies, the potentialities of America, the industrial pre-eminence of Britain, even the life and security of the British people—was in dire jeopardy. By June the solution had not been found, and the future was therefore still misty. Moreover, the essential problems of the war were becoming blurred. Up till then the campaign had been fought on data which were familiar and calculable. The material and human strength of each belligerent was known,

and the *moral* of each was confidently assessed. But suddenly new factors had appeared out of the void, and what had seemed solid ground became sand and quagmire. It was the old Europe which waged war up till the first months of 1917, but a new Europe had come into being by midsummer, in which nothing could be taken for granted. Everywhere in the world there was the sound of things breaking.

But to those who drew from these facts a pessimistic conclusion there was one answer. The business of the Allies was to destroy Germany's power for evil, by defeating and discrediting those elements in her Government which had been responsible for her outrage on civilization. The break-up of Germany's military machine in the field would have achieved this end ; but the same purpose might be gained if her existing *régime* were so discredited by failure that the break-up came from within her own borders. That might follow if the Allies succeeded in wrecking Germany's hope for the future. It was too often forgotten what was the decisive weapon in war. Now, as ever, it was economic pressure. When countries were small and self-supporting, this was exercised by the defeat of their armies and the invasion and occupation of their territories, so that their life was paralyzed. But in modern war, when the defensive has become all-powerful, another method must be found. Had the Allies been able to break through Germany's trench system and drive her to the Rhine and beyond, that success would have been only a preliminary to the determining and final pressure caused by the dislocation of her whole economic life. But while Haig and Nivelle were battering on the Western gate, that

final pressure was already being exercised. The Allies controlled all the oversea trade routes and all the world's chief supply grounds of raw material. Compared with such assets and gains the war map of von Bethmann-Hollweg was a child's toy. Without any final field victory the Allies already had secured the results of the greatest field victory: they were choking Germany, and ruining her future as much as if they had forced von Hindenburg back to the Elbe.

Such an answer to pessimism was in its essence sound, but it needed qualification. To rid the world of Prussianism something more was wanted. The thing must be made a sport and contempt to Germany herself, and, while an overwhelming military *débâcle* would have ensured this, the slow and indirect forces of economic pressure could not produce the same moral effect on the German temperament. Before victory was won there must be a recognition of failure in every German mind, and that was still postponed. Prussianism sat still enthroned, for it had persuaded its votaries that this was a defensive struggle, and that it alone stood between the people and the malice of their enemies. Not till it was revealed to the humblest eye as the sole begetter of the war, the parent of all the ills which had descended upon the nation, the wanton devilry which had shattered the edifice their fathers had builded, would civilization have won the victory it needed. Again, the Allied siege, stringent as it was, had its weak points. The submarine counter-attack was not yet under control, and the condition of Russia might still permit the enemy so to add to his material resources as to obtain a new lease of endurance long

enough to defeat the Allied strategy. These crucial matters in midsummer of 1917 were still in the balance. While, therefore, there was no cause for despondency among the Allies at the close of the third year, there was no cause for confident dogmatism. They had won greatly, but the end was not yet. On the knees of the gods yet lay the major issues of the campaign.

It was still a war of the rank and file. Neither in civilian statesmanship nor in the high military commands had any leader appeared who greatly exceeded the common stature of mankind. There were many able men in every country, but the ship seemed too vast and the currents too infinite for any single hand to control the helm. A hundred clung to it; but often it mastered them, and the vessel swung rudderless to wind and tide. A new star had blazed up in the East in Kerenski, but already it seemed that his fires were paling. The two most conspicuous statesmen at the close of the year were beyond doubt the British Prime Minister and the American President. They had scarcely one quality in common. The one was imaginative, reckless, homely, volcanic, essentially human; the other measured, discreet, impersonal, oracular, and aloof. The monarchy produced the democrat; the republic the autocrat. But both had courage and resolution to inspire their people; both spoke *urbi et orbi*; both stood out from the many transient shadows as clear-cut and dominant personalities.

Among the soldiers of the Central Powers the reputation of von Ludendorff had so grown that it was in danger of eclipsing the legendary fame of

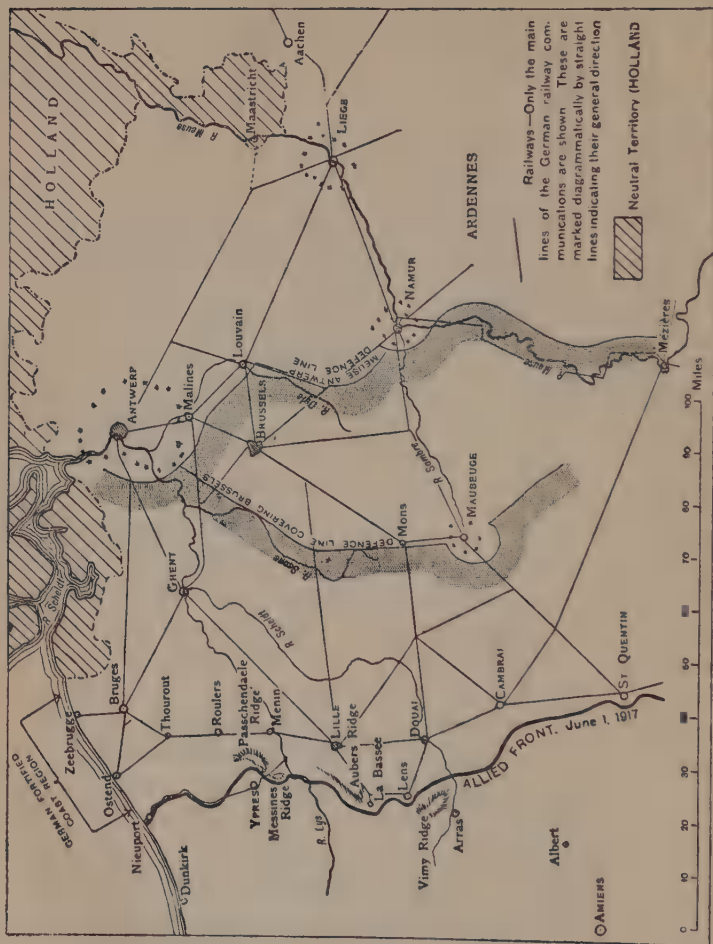
von Hindenburg himself. Here was a man of first-rate executive power, who knew with complete precision what he sought. Von Mackensen still stood highest among the German generals in the field; though von Armin, the new head of the Fourth Army, whom we last met as a corps commander on the Somme, was swiftly rising into fame. Among the Allies, Pétain and Cadorna had increased their reputations; and two British commanders, Sir Herbert Plumer and Sir Stanley Maude, had revealed the traditional British merits of stamina, forethought, and common sense. It was no insular prejudice, too, which saw in the British Commander-in-Chief one who had some claim to rank as the most indispensable soldier of the campaign. Fortune favoured him as little as she had favoured Sir John Moore; but he met her buffets with an inflexible patience and an unfailing courage, and on the Somme, at Arras, and at Messines he showed himself the most brilliant exponent of the new methods of war.

CHAPTER CXL.

THE THIRD BATTLE OF YPRES : MESSINES.

The Projected British Offensive in Flanders—The Ypres Salient in June 1917—German Dispositions—Von Armin's Instructions—British Dispositions—Sir Herbert Plumer—The Wyt-schaete-Messines Ridge—Plumer's Objective—His Elaborate Preparations—The Mines—The Air Fighting—The Attack of 7th June—Fall of Messines—The Irish Division—Death of Major W. Redmond—Fall of Wytschaete—The Fighting at Hollebeke—The Oosttaverne Line carried—The Germans fall back to La Basse Ville—Results of the Action—Successes at Lens.

THE Battle of Arras had died down before the end of May. Sir Douglas Haig, having protracted the fighting in that area so long as the French on the Aisne required his aid, was now free to turn his attention to the plan which as early as November 1916 had been his main objective. This was an offensive against the enemy forces in Flanders, with the aim of clearing the Belgian coast and turning the northern flank of the whole German defence system in the West. It was a scheme which, if successful, promised the most profound and far-reaching results. It would destroy the worst of the submarine bases ; it would return to Belgium her lost territory, and thereby deprive the enemy of one of his cherished bargaining assets ; it would cripple his main communications with the depots of the



Sketch Map showing the strategic situation on the eve of the Flanders Offensive of 1917.

Lower Rhineland. It offered the chance of a blow at a vital spot within a reasonable time. It was true that conditions had changed since the plan was first matured. The two months' conflict at Arras had used up a certain part of the British reserves. More important, the disastrous turn of the Russian situation had enabled the Germans to add greatly to their strength both in munitions and in men. Time, therefore, was the essence of the business. The blow must be struck at the earliest possible hour, for delay meant aggrandizement for the enemy.

But if the prize for success was high, the difficulties of the enterprise were great. For twelve months the front between the sea and the Lys had been all but stagnant. It had been for the first two years the chief cockpit of British arms, and the enemy had spent infinite ingenuity and labour on perfecting his defences. In the half-moon of hills* round Ypres and the ridge of Wytschaete and Messines he had view-points which commanded the whole countryside, and especially the British line within the Salient. Any preparations for attack would be conducted under his watchful eye. Moreover, the heavy, water-logged clay of the flats where our front lay was terribly at the mercy of weather, and in rain became a bottomless swamp. Any attack must be in the position of a horseman taking a stiff fence from a bad jumping-off ground. Lastly, the Germans were acutely conscious of the importance of

* The extreme insignificance of these hills should be remembered. Ypres itself is 82 feet above the sea, so Wytschaete's 260 feet of height does not represent much compared to the general level of the country.

the terrain, and there was little chance of taking them by surprise.

In the beginning of June the enemy in the Ypres area lay as follows. North of Ypres he was west of the canal between Steenstraat and Boesinghe. East of Ypres his front curved in a shallow arc, following the high ground called the Pilckem Ridge, by Wieltje and Hooze, which was the westernmost of the low tiers of hill which enclosed the Salient. From Observatory Ridge south of Hooze his line turned south-westward by Mount Sorrel and Hill 60 across the Ypres-Comines Canal to the point just south of the hamlet of St. Eloi. It then became a rounded salient, following the western skirts of the promontory formed by the Wytschaete-Messines Ridge. At the south end of this ridge it turned eastward down the valley of the Steenebeek, crossed the Douve, and passed east of St. Yves to the banks of the Lys.

The apex of the Ypres Salient had been Becelaere in October 1914; in April 1915 it had been Broodseinde; and by the end of the Second Battle of Ypres it had contracted to Verlorenhoek and Hooze. During subsequent fighting it had shrunk still further, so that now the enemy front was only some two miles from the town. Not only was the eastern high ground wholly in the enemy's hands, but at the southern re-entrant Hill 60 gave him direct observation over the Salient, and the Wytschaete-Messines Ridge commanded Ypres itself, and every yard of the British positions. The village of Wytschaete stood 260 feet high on the loftiest point, and Messines, at the south end of the ridge, gave a prospect over the Lys valley and enfiladed the British lines on the Douve. If Sir Douglas Haig

intended to break out from the Salient, he must first clear the Germans off the southern ridges. Till that was achieved the British would be fighting blindly against an enemy with a hundred eyes.

In June the German front from the sea to the Oise was held by the Army group of the Bavarian Crown Prince. The Duke of Wurtemberg had now gone south to the Vosges, and the Fourth Army, from the coast to the Douve, was under General Sixt von Armin, who had commanded the 4th Corps at the Somme, and had shown himself one of the most original and fruitful tacticians on the German side. South of him lay the Sixth Army, under Otto von Below, the right wing of which extended for a little way north of the Lys. Von Armin expected an assault even before our bombardment began, and he rightly diagnosed that its terrain would be the Messines Ridge. There lay the 4th German Corps, and on 1st June its commander, General von Laffert, issued an order to his troops which accurately defined the limits of the British attack. He ordered that all measures designed for defence and counter-attack should be carefully tested.

“ All the reserves of the divisions attacked (with the exception of the emergency garrisons) will be at the absolute disposal of those divisions for the purpose of repelling the attack. Plentiful and well-advanced fighting reserves of the Army group will permit of the continuous bringing up of other divisional reserves for an immediate powerful counter-attack. . . . The absolute retention of the natural strong points of Wytschaete and Messines becomes of the utmost importance for the domination of the whole Wytschaete salient. These strong points, therefore, must not fall, even temporarily, into the enemy's hands. Both must be de-

fended to the utmost, and held to the last man, even if the enemy has cut the connection on both sides and threatens the strong points from the rear. The troops must be told that we have very strong battle reserves close behind the front, which are destined to throw back any enemy who may have temporarily broken through, in our great counter-attack, should the battle reserves of the division not already have done so."

Von Armin was anxious but confident. He had a position strong by nature, and enormously fortified by art. He had ample reserves of men, and he had brought up many new batteries, which were disposed mainly north and south of the Wytschaete salient, so as to enfilade any British advance and be themselves safe from capture. He had a number of new anti-tank guns, and in the flattish ground at each end of the ridge he experimented in the construction of those concrete "pill-boxes" which were later to prove so serious an obstacle to the British advance from Ypres. His plan was to hold his front line lightly, but to have strong reserves in rear to defend any position of importance. Behind these were his battle reserves, to be used for counter-attacks; for his tactical policy was to trust to counter-attack before the enemy had secured his ground, rather than to fight desperately for every yard. For such tactics it was essential that the moment of the real offensive should be instantly grasped, and if possible foreseen. The reserves must be moved at once; but it would be fatal if they were moved because of a feint, for in that case they would fall under our barrage and be depleted before the time had come for their use. Von Armin had judged rightly about the terrain; but, as it happened, he could not define the hour. In no

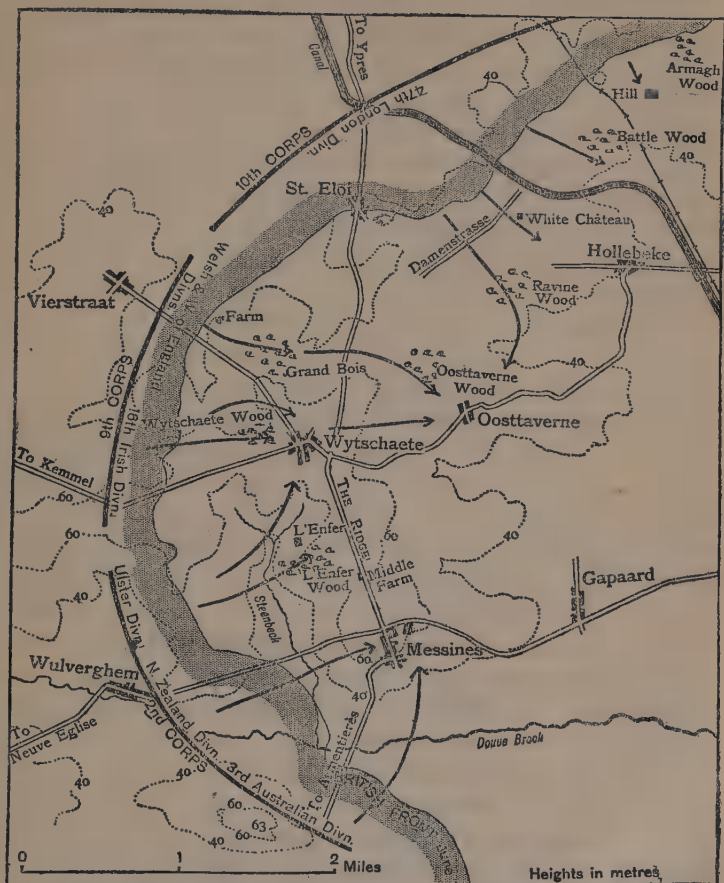
British attack had Sir Douglas Haig succeeded in concealing the *locale*; but in all he had perplexed the enemy as to the exact time of assault.

The British front was held by the Second Army, which had not altered its position since the spring of 1915. The First Army had fought at Festubert, and had borne the brunt of Loos. The Fourth and Fifth Armies had conducted the Battle of the Somme. The First, Third, and Fifth Armies had been engaged at Arras. But the last great action of the Second Army had been Second Ypres. It had seen much bitter fighting in 1916 round Hooze and the Bluff; but it had taken no part as an army in any major battle, though its divisions had been drawn upon for the Somme and Arras. To hold a long front not actively engaged, and to provide reinforcements for other armies, is one of the most difficult duties which can fall to the lot of a general. Corporate unity seems to have gone from his command, and it needs patience and resolution to keep up that vigilance and *esprit de corps* which are essential in war. The Second Army was fortunate in its leader. Sir Herbert Plumer, now sixty years of age, had in the highest degree the traditional virtues of the British soldier, and especially of those county line regiments which have always been the backbone of the British army. He had fought with his regiment, the York and Lancaster, in the Sudan in 1884; he had served in the Matabele rebellion; in the South African War he had contributed to the relief of Mafeking, had taken Pietersburg, and had hunted De Wet in the Cape Colony. At the Second Battle of Ypres he had shown a rapidity of decision and an imperturbability of temper which had turned

the tide in that grim encounter. But his most brilliant work had been accomplished during the long months of comparative inaction which followed. He had been a true warden of the Flanders marches, and had watched over every mile of that front, so that our energy in defence and in the minor offensives of trench warfare never slackened. Assisted by a most competent staff, he had inspired throughout his army a complete trust in their leader, and had welded all types—old Regulars, Territorials, New Army—into one tempered weapon. There were no jealousies under his command, and every man in it knew that competence and faithfulness would be recognized and rewarded. Moreover, for a year and more Sir Herbert Plumer had been making ready for the offensive in which he was to play the chief part. Methodical and patient preparation had been carried by him to the pitch of genius.

To understand the battle it is necessary to examine more closely the topography of the Wyt-schaete-Messines ridge. Seen from the western hills, such as Kemmel, behind the British lines, it appeared to be an inconsiderable slope merging in the north in the low ridges east of Ypres, but breaking down in the south to the Lys valley in a steeper gradient. The landmarks on it were the ruins of the White Château at Hollebeke, the dust-heap which once was Wytschaete village, and the tooth of the ruined church of Messines. Viewed from below, from the British trenches in the marshy flats of the Steenebeek, it was more imposing—a low hillside seamed with white trenches, and dotted with the *débris* of old woods—a bald, desolated height,

arid as a brickfield, rising from the rank grass and yellow mustard of No Man's Land. The German



Sketch showing general scheme of the attack on the Messines-Wytschaete Ridge.

first-line trenches curved along the foot of the slope, and their second line system made an inner

curve on the crest of the ridge. To the north the Germans held Hill 60 and the Mound at St. Eloi, and had constructed strong fortifications in the grounds of the White Château, and along the road called the Damm Strasse which led from Hollebeke to Wytschaete. But, as in all salients, the most important defence was the chord which cut the arc—what the Germans called *Sehnenstellung*—and which was intended as the rear defence should the front of the Salient be carried. The third German system was such a chord, running from Mount Sorrel in the north, a little east of the village of Oosttaverne, to Gapaard in the south. This line was the proper base of the Salient. A mile east of it lay the fourth and final German position in that area, which reached the Lys at the town of Warneton. The Oosttaverne line was the British objective in the action, for its capture would mean that the Salient had gone and the whole ridge was in our hands. To reach it the enemy front must be penetrated to a depth of two and a half miles. Its length was about six miles; but if the curve of the main salient was followed, without reckoning the many minor salients and re-entrants, the whole battle frontage was nearly ten. It should be remembered, too, that, apart from the main enemy lines, the whole western face of the ridge, and all the little woods to the north and north-west, were a maze of skilfully sited trenches and redoubts, designed to bring flanking fire to bear upon any ground won by the attack.

The British front of assault was held by three of the six corps of the Second Army. From opposite Mount Sorrel, astride the Ypres-Comines Canal to the Grand Bois just north of Wytschaete, lay the

10th Corps, under General Morland, with a north-country division on its extreme left, and the 47th London Division in the centre. Opposite Wytschaete was the 9th Corps, under General Hamilton-Gordon, containing Welsh and West of England troops and the 16th Irish Division. South lay the 2nd Anzac Corps, under General Godley, with the Ulster Division on its left, the New Zealand Division as its centre, and the 3rd Australian Division on its right astride the Douve. The two southern corps had the task of the direct assault on the ridge, while the 10th Corps, with a much longer front, had to clear the hillocks towards the Ypres Salient, and advance upon the ridge and the Oosttaverne line from its northern flank.

The Wytschaete-Messines Ridge had seen no fighting since the close of 1914. At the end of October in that year, during the First Battle of Ypres, Allenby's weary cavalry, assisted by Indian and British infantry, had made for two days a gallant stand at Messines before they were forced into the flats. In December a combined attack had been made by French and British troops on the woods of Petit Bois and Maedelsteed, west of Wytschaete, but the position had proved too strong to carry. Thereafter, while the battle had raged as near as St. Eloi in the north and Fromelles in the south, the Messines area had been an enclave of quiet. But for nearly two years an offensive had been going on underground. As early as July 1915 it had been resolved to make use of the clay stratum below our position for extensive mining operations, and in January 1916 we had gone seriously to work. We used in our tunnelling companies some of the best

expert talent in the world, men who in private life had received huge salaries from mining corporations. It was work attended by endless difficulties and dangers. Water-bearing strata would suddenly be encountered, which necessitated damming and pumping work on a big scale. The enemy was busy countermining, and we had to be ever on the watch to detect his progress, and by *camouflets* * to blow in his galleries. At some points the struggle was continuous and desperate, especially after February 1, 1917. At the Bluff, for instance, between January 16, 1916, and June 7, 1917, twenty-seven *camouflets* were blown, seventeen by the British and ten by the enemy. The Spanbroekmolen mine, south-west of Wytschaete, had its gallery destroyed; for three months it was cut off, and only reopened by a great effort the day preceding the Messines attack. But the most dramatic case was that of Hill 60. To quote the official report :—

“ At Hill 60 continuous underground fighting took place for over ten months prior to our attack, and only by the greatest skill, persistence, and disregard of danger on the part of our tunnellers were the two mines laid by us at this point saved from destruction. At the time of our offensive the enemy was known to be driving a gallery which ultimately would have cut into the gallery leading to the Hill 60 mine. By careful listening it was judged that if our offensive took place on the date arranged the enemy's gallery would just fail to reach us. So he was allowed to proceed.”

In all we dug twenty-four mines, and some of these were ready a year before the attack. We constructed some five miles of galleries, and charged

* A *camouflet* is a mine with a small charge, intended only to destroy an enemy shaft, and not to make a crater.

them with over a million pounds of ammonal. Four were outside the front ultimately selected for our attack, and one was destroyed by the enemy. But on the evening of 6th June nineteen were waiting for zero hour.

The preparation was not confined to underground. Road and railway communications had been improved throughout the whole area. In order to provide water for our advance the various lakes and ponds behind the line were tapped; cisterns to catch rain water were constructed on the Kemmel hills; and the water of the Lys was pumped into barges and sterilized. From these sources pipe lines were carried forward to the front, and provision was made for their rapid extension after the attack. The consequence was that troops could be supplied with water half an hour or so after winning their objective—no slight boon in a battle fought in the height of summer.

Again, from the last days of May a pitiless bombardment had assailed the enemy area, devastating his front line and searching out his rear positions. The last remnants of Wytschaete and Messines villages disappeared. The woods on the slopes ceased to be tattered, and became fields of stumps. In that hot, dry weather a cloud of dust hung all day long about the slopes, and at night they blazed like the boulevard of a great city. Our raiding activity was unceasing, and from the dazed prisoners and from many captured letters we learned of the miseries of the enemy. Certain Irish troops made five distinct raids in forty hours. British aircraft spent their days over the German hinterland, and prevented any enemy planes from learning

the extent of our preparation. "Our machines never even get so far as our front lines," wrote a German officer. In one fight five British planes encountered twenty-seven German, wrecked eight, and returned safely home. Between 1st June and 6th June we destroyed twenty-four enemy machines, and drove down twenty-three out of control, at the cost of ten of our own.

On the evening of Wednesday, 6th June, the weather broke in a violent thunderstorm. Torrents

June 6. of rain fell, and from the baked earth rose a warm mist which folded the ground like a cloak. During the night the heavens were overcast, so that the full moon was not seen, and only a luminous glow told of its presence. But at 2.30 a.m. on the 7th the skies cleared, the moon rode out, and to a watcher on the hills to the west the whole landscape stood forth in a sheen made up of moonlight and the foreglow of dawn. Our bombardment had abated, but during the night the enemy had grown nervous. He had sent up rockets and flames calling for a barrage, and his guns began to pour forth shrapnel and high explosives. Somewhere north of Wytschaete a dump had caught fire, and poured forth tongues of red flame. As the dawn broadened our guns seemed to cease, though the enemy's were still active. The air was full of the hum of our bombing and reconnoitring planes flying eastward, and our balloons were going up—tawny patches against the June sky. Then came a burst of German high explosives, and then, at precisely ten minutes past three, a sound compared to which all other noises were silence.

From Hill 60 in the north to the edge of Mes-

sines, with a shock that made the solid earth quiver like a pole in the wind, nineteen vol-canoes leaped to heaven. Nineteen *June 7.* sheets of flame seemed to fill the world. For a moment it looked as if the earth, under a magician's wand, had been contorted into gigantic toadstools. The black cloud-caps seemed as real as the soil beneath them. Then they shook and wavered and thinned, leaving a brume of dust, rosy and golden atop with the rising sun. And at the same moment, while the ears were still throbbing with the concussion of the mines, every British gun opened on the enemy. Flashes of many colours stabbed the wall of dust, the bursts of shrapnel stood out white against it, and smoke barrages from our trenches burrowed into its roots. The sun was now above the horizon, and turned the fringes of the cloud to a hot purple and crimson. No battle had ever a more beautiful and terrible staging. And while the *débris* of the explosion still hung in the air the British divisions of assault went over their parapets.

They entered at once upon a world like the nether pit—poisonous with gas fumes, twisted and riven out of all character, a maze of quarried stone, moving earth, splintered concrete, broken wire, and horrible fragments of humanity. In most places the German front lines had been blown out of existence. A few nerve-shattered survivors were taken prisoner in the dug-outs that had escaped destruction, and here and there a gallant machine-gun officer, who had miraculously survived, obeyed his orders till death took him. Let us follow from south to north the progress of the British advance.

The 3rd Australian Division, facing the extreme right of Otto von Below's Sixth Army, pushed across the Douve on duckboard bridges, and, assisted by a Tank drove the enemy by the early afternoon from the southern slopes of the Messines Ridge. This safeguarded our right flank, and enabled the New Zealand Division to move securely on Messines village. The latter swarmed across the Steenebeek and climbed the hill on the side where the Armentières road dipped to the flats. A little after five the smoke had cleared sufficiently to show them the skyline to the north and the men of the Ulster Division silhouetted there. The New Zealanders, fighting their way in from the south, cleared Messines by seven o'clock. They were now reinforced by the 4th Australians, who moved on to the redoubt called Fanny's Farm, half a mile to the north-east. A Tank cleared out the garrison, and by midday the Second Anzac Corps had won their main objective.

Farther north the Ulster Division, which contained on its right a battalion of the Cheshires, had moved from the trenches north of Wulverghem against that part of the ridge which lay between Messines and Wytschaete. They had before them a peculiarly difficult problem. On the crest midway between the two villages ran the Bois de l'Enfer and the concrete fort of L'Enfer, and to the south another nest of redoubts which was known as Hell Farm. To reach the crest the division had to move down the exposed western slope of the Steenebeek valley, cross the stream, ascend the opposite slope, and carry the various Hell positions. Beyond the crest were strong trench lines, and a bare open plateau all the way to Oosttaverne and Gapaard.

From their starting-place it was 2,000 yards to the crest. The German position had been held by the 40th Saxons; but on the evening of the 6th June they were relieved by the famous 3rd Bavarians, so that the Ulstermen had to face an unwearied and most gallant enemy.

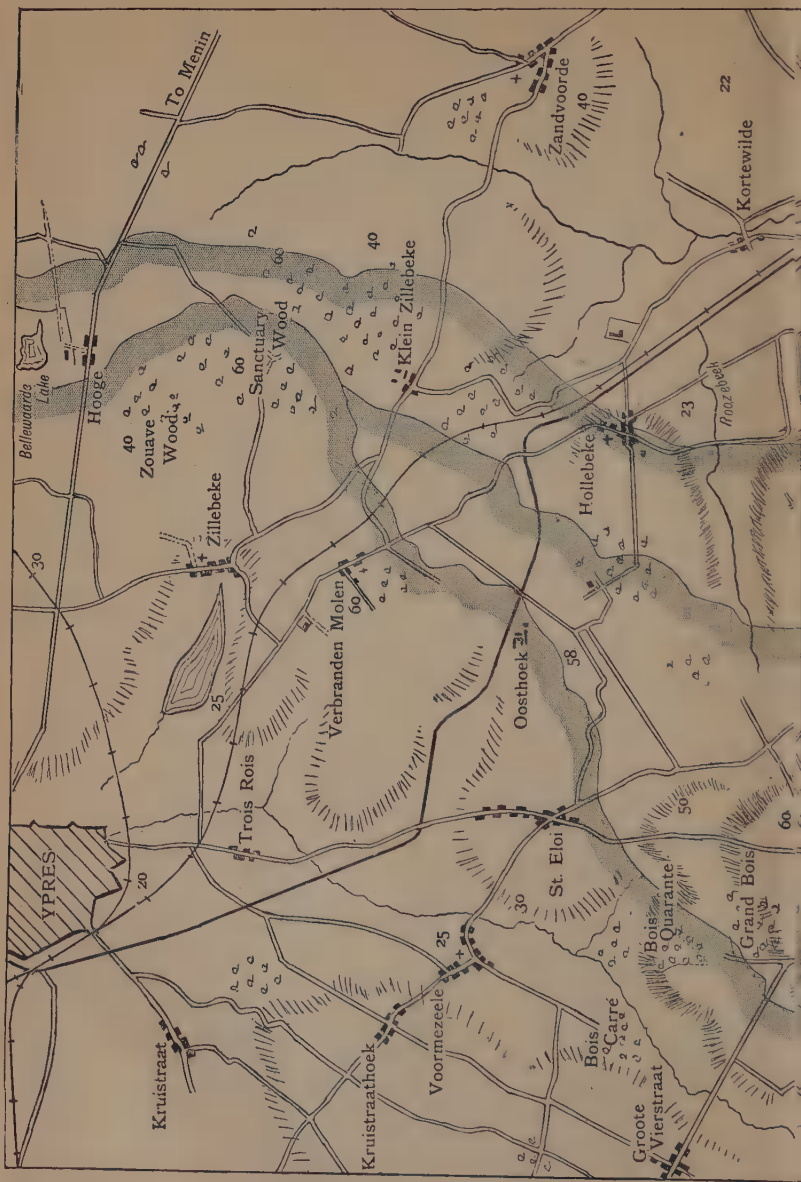
During the night before the attack the Cheshires had moved into No Man's Land, and dug a trench for their starting-point next day. Hence the enemy barrage, when it began, fell behind them. The explosion of the Spanbroekmolen mine gave the division some cover when they raced down the Steenebeek slopes. Across the stream they rushed and up the ridge, and soon the Cheshires were at work among the Hell redoubts. By stern hand-to-hand fighting they cleared them out, and presently the whole division was on the crest line, where a broad highway linked Messines and Wytschaete. There they halted for reserves, and then swept through the trench system east of the road. Linked up with the Anzacs, they took Middle Farm and Despagne Farm, and by midday were up against the Oostta-verne line.

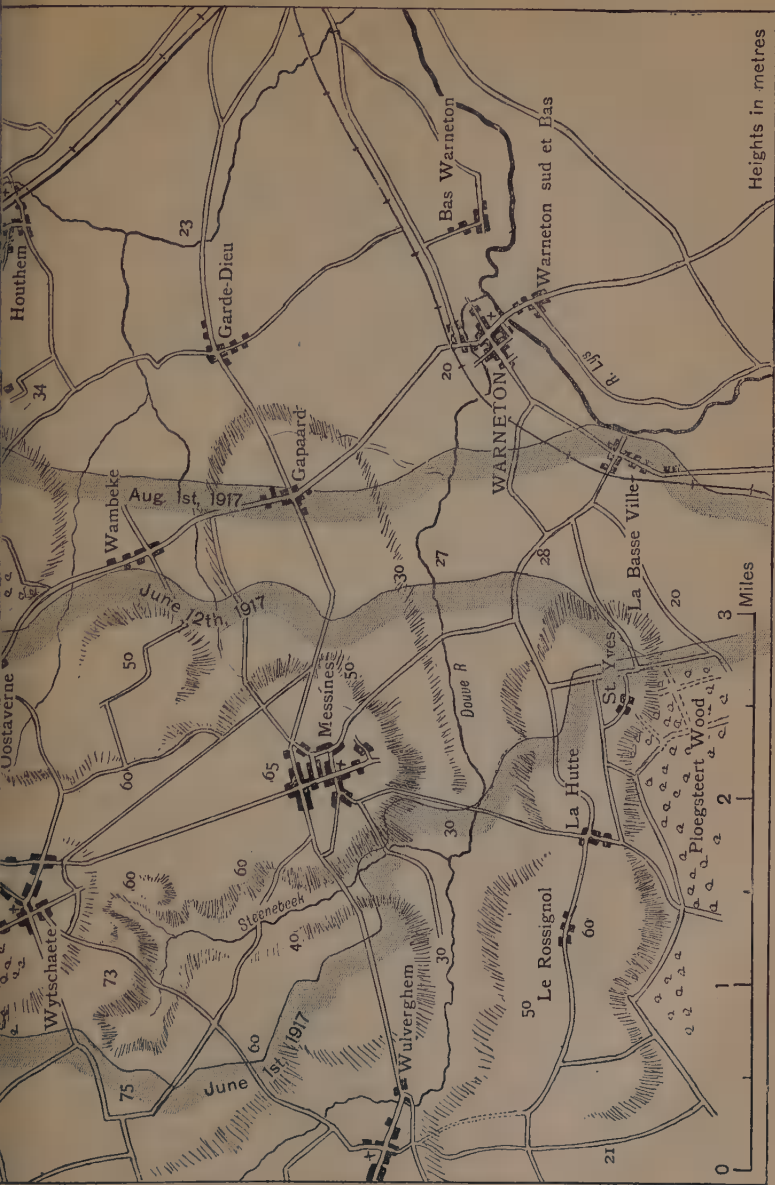
Wytschaete fell to the left wing of the Ulstermen, and the 16th (South Ireland) Division. Now were seen, for the first time for generations, Irish units, widely sundered by politics and creed, fighting in generous rivalry for a common cause. The first obstacle, the wood called Petit Bois, was wiped out of being by a mine explosion. The Irish drove on into Wytschaete Wood, tearing through the uncut wire, and overwhelming machine-gun nests by the sheer fury of their onset. By eight o'clock they were opposite the northern and western defences

of Wytschaete, while the Ulstermen were waiting at the southern end of the village. Long before noon the place was carried, and the Irish were moving down the road to Oosttaverne. In the early hours of the day this division had sustained a grievous loss. The brother of the Irish Nationalist leader, Major William Redmond, was hit by a shell fragment, and died a few hours later. Though far beyond military age, he had enlisted early in the war, and had loyally endured all the hardships of campaigning, which do not come easily to a man well advanced in middle life. He had striven all his days for Irish unity, and he had put his precepts most gallantly into practice. *Felix opportunitate mortis*, he had lived to see that union of spirit realized, if not in the dusty *coulisses* of politics, in the nobler arena of battle, and it was an Ulster ambulance that bore him from the field.

Meantime, on the left of the French and beyond the Wytschaete-Vierstraat road Welsh and West of England divisions were moving on the northern butt of the ridge. Starting from Hollandscheschuur Farm, the Welsh picked their way through the smoking mine craters, and, with the assistance of the West Countrymen, carried the Grand Bois. Soon they were over the crest and through the German second system beyond the Ypres-Armentières road. By midday they were fighting in Oosttaverne Wood, and early in the afternoon were on the edge of Oosttaverne itself.

On the British left the situation was more complex, for the tactical problem was far less simple than the straightforward assault on the ridge. General Morland's 10th Corps had to fight astride a





The Messines Ridge.

canal in a confused country of hillocks and ravines and nondescript woods. The extreme left, North England troops of the 23rd Division, had the easiest task. Around Mount Sorrel and Armagh Wood the German front had been blown to pieces. Hill 60, with its elaborate defences, had virtually disappeared. Our losses were trifling, and one battalion won its objective with only ten casualties. But the Londoners of the 47th Division had a harder task. Few divisions had borne themselves more gallantly in the war, and Loos and High Wood were only two of their many battle honours. They were held by machine-gun fire from the spoil banks on each side of the Ypres-Comines Canal; and, with English south-country troops on the right, had to fight for the strongholds of Ravine Wood and Battle Wood, the White Château, and the long, fortified line of the Damm Strasse. The last had been well broken up by our bombardment, but in the grounds and outbuildings of the Château and around the dry lake there was sharp fighting. In Ravine Wood a Kentish battalion had a desperate bayonet struggle with part of the German 35th Division. By the early afternoon, however, the 10th Corps had gained its final objectives, with the exception of a small part of the eastern end of Battle Wood and a few strong points on the canal banks. The flank was therefore safe, and the British centre lay parallel to the Oosttaverne line, between 400 and 700 yards to the west of it.

Our guns had advanced, and the time had come for the final attack. It was launched about three o'clock, and at 3.45 the Welsh entered the village of Oosttaverne from the west. By four the English

county troops on their left had taken the Oosttaverne line east of the village, and captured twelve guns. Before darkness fell the whole of the line was in our hands, and Sir Herbert Plumer had gained his final objective.

The counter-attack which von Armin had planned was slow to develop. On the afternoon of the 7th there was a small attempt on the right of our front, which was easily repulsed by the Australians. During the night we secured our gains, and on the

June 8. morning of the 8th cleared up a few remaining lengths of German trench. Not till that evening was there any sign of a counter-stroke. At 7 p.m., after an intense bombardment, the Germans attacked along nearly the whole length of our new line, and at every point were repulsed. The surprise and shock of the action of the 7th had been too great to permit of a speedy recovery. During the next few days the Australians took the farm of La Potterie, little more than a mile west of Warneton, and the village of Gapaard, on the Ypres-Warneton road. The position of the right wing of von Below's Sixth Army between St. Yves and the Lys was now untenable. It gradually withdrew to La

June 14. Basse Ville, and by the 14th the whole of the old German positions north of the Lys, both front and support lines, had fallen into our hands. That evening we attacked again on both our flanks, clearing out some of the strong points north of the Ypres-Comines Canal, and forcing the enemy on the south back to the line of the river Warnave.

Sir Herbert Plumer's task had been brilliantly and fully accomplished. In a single day's fighting he had advanced two and a half miles on ■

front of nearly ten ; he had wiped out the German salient, and carried also its chord ; he had stormed positions on the heights which the enemy regarded as impregnable ; his losses were extraordinarily small, and he had taken 7,200 prisoners, 67 guns, 94 trench mortars, and 294 machine guns. The Battle of Messines will rank in history with Nivelle's two victories at Verdun, in the winter of 1916, as a perfect instance of the success of the limited objective. It could not be a normal type of battle. The elaborate preparation, the concentration of guns, and the careful rehearsal of every part demanded time and quiet which cannot be commonly reckoned on in war. But Sir Herbert Plumer had achieved what deserves to be regarded as in its own fashion a tactical masterpiece.

Meantime, in order to mask the preparations which were being made for the main enterprise of the summer—the break-out from the Ypres Salient—General Horne's Third Army undertook various small offensives. On 14th June we carried by a surprise attack the enemy lines on the crest of Infantry Hill south-east of Arras, taking 175 prisoners in two minutes. On the 15th we took a sector of the Hindenburg Line north-east of Bullecourt. For some weeks Canadian and English troops had been active in the neighbourhood of Lens, and on the 24th the North Midland Division carried Hill 65, south-west of the town, forcing the enemy to withdraw on both sides of the Souchez river. On the 26th the Canadians took La Coulotte, and on the morning of the 28th were in the outskirts of Avion. That evening General Horne devised

June 15.

June 24.

June 28.

ingenious bluff. Elaborate demonstrations were made by means of the discharge of gas and smoke to convince the enemy that he was about to be attacked on the twelve-mile front from Gavrelle to Hulluch, and a bogus raid was carried out south-east of Loos. The real attack was made on a front of 2,000 yards in front of Oppy, and by the Canadians and North Midlanders astride the Souchez river. We gained all our objectives, including the southern part of the ruins of Avion and the hamlet of Eleu dit Leauvette, on the Lens-Arras road, together with 300 prisoners and many machine guns. More important, we succeeded in puzzling the enemy as to what was the aim of our main offensive. Messines pointed to Lille as much as to Ypres, and the activity at Lens suggested that our aim might be to cut in to north and south of Lille, and wrest the great French industrial city from the enemy.

CHAPTER CXLI.

THE THIRD BATTLE OF YPRES : THE SALIENT AND PASSCHENDAELE.

The Plan of the Flanders Offensive—Its Difficulties—Von Armin's Defence—Redistribution of British Forces—The Coast Battle of 10th July—The Preparation in the Salient—The Allied Plan and Dispositions—The Attack of 31st July—The Weather breaks—Minor Actions—The Canadians at Lens—The Attack of 16th August—Its Failure—Sir H. Plumer brought northward—The " Pill-Boxes "—The Attack of 19th September—German Counter-Attacks—The Attack of 4th October—Fall of Poelcapelle—Sir D. Haig's Problem—Abortive Attack of 9th October—French enter Houthulst Forest—Attack of 26th October—French clear Merckem Peninsula—The Final Attack on Passchendaele Ridge—The Canadians enter Passchendaele Village—Results of Third Battle of Ypres—Valour and Endurance of Troops—Sir D. Haig's Tribute—The Meaning of the Ypres Salient to the British Army.

THE Third Battle of Ypres was the residuum left to Sir Douglas Haig of the great plan of a Flanders offensive which he had conceived the previous winter. Events which he could not control had postponed it till too late in the summer. His preparation for it had been impeded time and again by the necessity of turning his attention to some other area. When at last his hands were free, there were certain special obstacles, the story of which cannot yet be told, which postponed the actual launching of the attack. The preliminary

work of Messines was over by 12th June, but it was not till late in July that the day of the main advance was fixed. The delay meant that the enterprise was much canvassed in Germany, and the enemy line fully warned between Lille and the sea.

The plan, as it was finally put into action, bristled with difficulties which might have deterred a less stout-hearted commander. It was in some degree a race against time. If a true strategic purpose was to be effected before winter, the first stages must be quickly passed. The high ground east of the Salient must be won in a fortnight, to enable the British to move against the German bases in West Flanders and clear the coastline. Moreover, it was now evident that the Russian front was crumbling; already many divisions and batteries had come westward, and those left behind had been skimmed for shock-troops. Soon the process would proceed more rapidly, and the British would be faced with an accumulation of reserves strong enough to bar their way. Again, the nature of the terrain made any offensive a gamble with the weather. A dry autumn like that of 1914 would be well enough, but a repetition of the Somme experience must spell disaster. The Salient was, after Verdun, the most tortured of the Western battlefields. Constant shelling of the low ground west of the ridges had blocked or diverted the streams and the natural drainage and turned it into a sodden wilderness. Much rain would make of it a morass where Tanks could not be used, and transport could scarcely move, and troops would be exposed to the last degree of misery. Finally, as has already been pointed out, it was ill ground to debouch from; for though we had won the Messines

heights, the enemy still held the slopes which, in semicircular tiers, rise to the main ridge of Passchendaele, and had direct observation over all the land west to the canal and the ruins of Ypres. Whatever might be the strength and skill of the Germans, they were less formidable than the barriers which Nature herself might place in the British path.

But the commander of the German Fourth Army was no despicable antagonist. He had suffered a sharp defeat at Messines; but he had the type of mind which reacts against failure, and, as he had done a year before on the Somme, he set himself to adapt his defence to the British mode of attack. During the first half of 1917 the enemy's major plan had been that of retirement through various fortified zones. He was still strictly on the defensive, and his aim was to allow the Allies to waste their strength in making small territorial gains which had no real strategic value. He had successively lost all his most important observation points; but he had still on most parts of his front those immense entrenchments, constructed largely by the labour of Russian prisoners, which could only be captured piecemeal after a great expense of shells. In Flanders the nature of the ground did not permit of a second Siegfried Line. Deep dug-outs and concrete-lined trenches were impossible because of the water-logged soil, and he was compelled to find new tactics.

Von Armin's solution was the "pill-box" which we have already noted at Messines. These were small concrete forts, sited among the ruins of a farm or in some derelict piece of woodland, often raised only a yard or two above the ground level, and bristling with machine guns. The low entrance

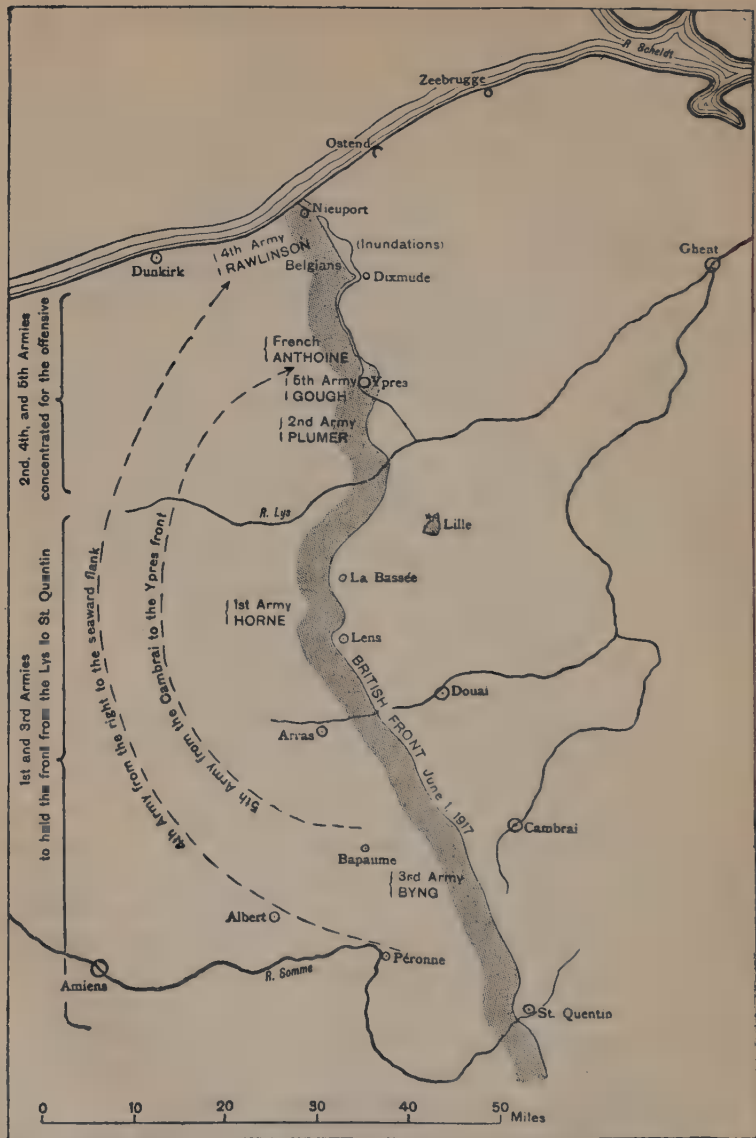
was at the rear, and the ordinary pill-box held from twenty to forty men. It was easy to make, for the wooden or steel framework could be brought up on any dark night and filled with concrete. They were echeloned in depth with great skill; and, in the wiring, alleys were left so that an unwary advance would be trapped among them and exposed to enfilading fire. Their small size made them a difficult mark for heavy guns, and since they were protected by concrete at least three feet thick, they were impregnable to the ordinary barrage of field artillery.

The enemy's plan was to hold his first line—which was often a mere string of shell-craters linked by a trench—with few men, who would fall back before an assault. He had his guns well behind, so that they should not be captured in the first rush, and would be available for a barrage when his opponents were entangled in the "pill-box" zone. Finally, he had his reserves in the second line, ready for the counterstroke before the attack could secure the ground won. It will be seen that these tactics were admirably suited for the exposed and contorted ground of the Salient. Any attack would be allowed to make some advance; but if the German plan worked well, this advance would be short-lived, and would be dearly paid for. Instead of the cast-iron front of the Siegfried area, the Flanders line would be highly elastic, but would spring back into position after pressure with a deadly rebound.

The new offensive involved a complete redistribution of the Allied forces. The front of the Third Army, under Sir Julian Byng, who had succeeded to Allenby's command, was greatly extended,

and now covered all the ground between Arras and the junction with the French. This released Sir Hubert Gough's Fifth Army and Sir Henry Rawlinson's Fourth Army for service in the north. In early June French troops had held the front on the Yser between St. Georges and the sea. These were now relieved by the British Fourth Army. The Belgian forces on the canal drew in their right from Boesinghe to Noordschoote, and that section was occupied by the French First Army of three corps under General Anthoine, who had commanded the Sixth Army in spring in the Moronvilliers battle. From Boesinghe to the Zillebeke-Zandvoorde road south-east of Ypres lay the British Fifth Army, and on its right the Second Army as far as the Lys. From Armentières to Arras Sir Henry Horne's First Army held the front. The main striking forces were Gough's and Anthoine's; but it was intended that Horne should undertake, by way of distraction, certain movements against Lens, and that Plumer should threaten to the south of the Salient so as to compel the enemy to distribute his artillery fire.

The appearance of Rawlinson on the coast in the second half of June gravely alarmed the German command. It seemed to indicate an attack along the shore, assisted by our Fleet at sea, which had long been a favourite subject of German speculation. They resolved to anticipate it by depriving the British of their bridgehead east of the canalized Yser. The dunes formed a belt of dry land along the coast about a mile wide, where movement was possible in any weather; but south of them lay a flat country criss-crossed with endless streams and

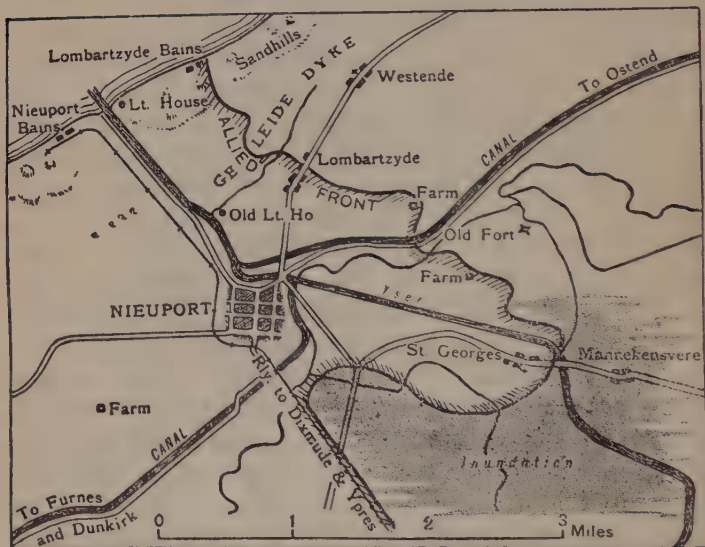


Regrouping of the British Armies for the Flanders Offensive, 1917.

ditches which could be easily flooded so as to bar the advance of an enemy. The Allied line, which from Dixmude northward lay on the west bank of the Yser, crossed to the east bank south of Nieuport. This gave us a bridge-end about two miles long, and from 600 to 1,200 yards deep, from the Plasschendaele Canal south of Lombartzyde to the sea. Half-way a dyke known as the Geleide Creek intersected our front. If the enemy could drive us across the Yser, he would have a stronger defensive position in the event of a coastal advance.

Very early on the morning of Tuesday, 10th July, an intense bombardment broke out against the bridgehead. There was a heavy gale blowing, which probably accounted for *July 10.* the absence of British naval support. In the dune and polder country trenches were impossible, and the British defence consisted of breastworks built in the sand. These were speedily flattened out, and all the bridges across the Yser north of the Geleide dyke were destroyed, as well as the bridges over the dyke itself. The bombardment continued all day, and at 6.30 in the evening troops of a German Naval Division advanced in three waves. The bridgehead between the Geleide Creek and the shore was held by two battalions of the Northhamptons and the King's Royal Rifles. Since all communications were destroyed, they were unable to fall back; and for an hour, against overwhelming numbers, and in positions from which all cover had gone, they maintained a most gallant defence. By eight o'clock the action was over, and the two battalions had disappeared as units, though during that and the following night some seventy men and four officers

managed to swim the Yser and return to our lines. The northern part of the bridgehead was captured ; but south of the Geleide dyke, opposite Lombartzyde, where our position had greater depth, and some of the Yser bridges were still intact, the assault was held, and the enemy driven out of our lines by a counter-attack. The affair was trivial and



Scene of the German Attack near Nieuport.

easily explicable : the bridgehead was at the mercy of a sudden attack in force unless we had chosen to take very special measures to defend it. It was another instance of what the past two years had abundantly proved—that any advanced trench system could be taken by the side which was prepared to mass sufficient troops and guns.

Meantime through July the preparations for the great Salient battle were being assiduously pressed on. The shell of Ypres did not provide, either above ground or underground, the cover for the assembling of troops which Arras had afforded; consequently the labours of our tunnelling companies were heavy and incessant. Our aircraft did marvellous work in locating enemy batteries, and our guns in destroying them. Of the latter arm the official dispatch tells a remarkable story:—

“A howitzer battery had received orders to cut a section of German wire in the neighbourhood of Hooge, and four hundred rounds had been allocated for the purpose. The battery, situated in an unavoidably exposed position in the neighbourhood of Zillebeke Lake, had already been subjected to constant shelling. On the occasion referred to, not more than fifty rounds had been fired at the German wire, when a hostile 15 cm. battery opened a steady and accurate fire in enfilade. Each time the British battery opened, salvos of 15 cm. shells raked its position. Four of its six guns were put out of action, and two ammunition dumps were blown up; but the remaining two guns continued in action until the last of the four hundred rounds had been fired. A few days later, when our infantry advanced over the sector this battery had shelled, the enemy's wire was found to have been completely cut.”

So good was our counter-battery work that the enemy frequently withdrew his guns, and thus compelled us to postpone our attack in order that the new positions might be located. All through July our bombardment continued, till every corner of the Salient was drenched with our fire. We made con-

stant raids and gas attacks, the latter with deadly effect; and it is worth noting that the place where the enemy seems to have suffered most from this weapon was precisely the region astride the Poelcapelle road, where in April 1915 he had made his first gas attack on the French and the Canadians. Towards the end of the month there were signs that von Armin might upset our plans by a withdrawal to his rear defences, and we had to keep jealous watch on the enemy's movements. On 27th July,

July 27. in the Boesinghe area, it was discovered that his front trenches were unoccupied, and that he had fallen back some distance, whether out of fear of mines like those at Messines or from the sheer weight of our bombardment. Anthoine's right wing and Gough's left accordingly crossed the canal, and occupied the German front and support lines on a front of 3,000 yards. They held their ground till the attack began, and managed by night to throw seventeen bridges across the canal in their rear.

The front of attack was fifteen miles long, from the Lys river to a little north of Steenstraat, but the main effort was planned for the seven and a half miles between Boesinghe and the Zillebeke-Zandvoorde road. The Allied lines ran from the canal in a curve south-eastward through the village of Wieltje and along the foot of the low slope, which may be defined by the points Pilckem, Bellewaarde, Hooge, and Sanctuary Wood. Thence it ran south across the Ypres-Comines Canal to the Oostaverne line, and thence to the Lys opposite La Basse Ville. It was the business of the French to clear the land between the canal and that mysterious creek

which in its lower reaches is called the Martjevaart, and further up the St. Jansbeek. Their right had to cover much ground, for it had to keep pace with Gough's left. The task of the British Fifth Army was, by a series of bounds, to capture the enemy's first defences situated on the forward slope of the rising ground, and his second position sited along the crest, and at the same time to secure the crossings of the Steenbeek or Hannebeek, the muddy ditch which flows by St. Julien to join the St. Jansbeek, north-east of Bixschoote. If this could be done at once and the weather favoured, a strong defensive flank could be formed for a break-through in the direction of Thourout towards the north-east. In the Fifth Army were four corps of assault—from left to right, the 14th, under Lord Cavan; the 18th, under Lieutenant-General Ivor Maxse; the 19th, under Lieutenant-General Watts; and the 2nd, under Lieutenant-General Jacob. The Second Army, on their right, had a strictly limited objective. Its right was ordered to take La Basse Ville, on the Lys, and its left to capture Hollebeke village, and clear the difficult ground north of the bend of the Ypres-Comines Canal and east of Battle Wood. Against the British attack alone the enemy had thirteen divisions in line, including the 3rd Guard Division, and four Bavarian—the 4th, 10th, 16th, and 6th Reserve.

The last week of July was dull, cloudy weather, with poor visibility for air work. On the morning of Monday, the 30th, came a heavy thunderstorm, and rain fell in the after-*July 30.* noon. All day the Allied bombardment continued

at its height, and during the drizzling night. The rain stopped towards dawn, but a thick mist remained, and the ground was plashy and the skies overcast as zero hour drew near. There was a short lull in the firing after three ; but precisely at

July 31. 3.50 a.m. on the 31st the whole Allied front broke into flame. Under cover of discharges of thermit and blazing oil, and such a barrage as had not yet been seen, the infantry crossed their parapets, and the battle began.

The whole of the German front position fell at once. Anthoine crossed the canal and took Steenstraat. Verlorenhoek fell to the 15th Division, who that day added to a record of victories which included Martinpuich and Feuchy. Further south, pushing through Sanctuary Wood and Shrewsbury Forest, we carried the château of Hooze and the lake of Bellewaarde, and came to the foot of that lift of the Menin road which was the pillar of the enemy's position on the heights. The Allies then pressed on to the attack on the second position, and by nine in the morning the whole of it north of Westhoek was in their hands. Frezenberg, after a stubborn fight, was won by the 15th Division ; English county troops entered St. Julien ; and the 38th Welsh Division took Pilkem and annihilated the Fusilier regiment of the 3rd Prussian Guards. Pommern Redoubt, north of Frezenberg, was won by the 55th Division of West Lancashire Territorials. The 51st Highland Territorials and the Guards seized the crossings of the Steenbeek. In a captured German document, which provided a "black list" of the British divisions, the 51st were given first place, and the enemy that day

had no reason to revise his judgment. On the centre and left of our attack all our final objectives had been gained, and at one or two points we had gone beyond them. The French, for example, took Bixschoote; the Guards advanced beyond the Steenbeek; and at one point in our centre we reached and penetrated the enemy's third trench system, that known as the Gheluvelt-Langemarck line.

More slow and difficult was the fighting on the right of the Fifth Army along the Menin road. Stirling Castle, the strong point which dominated Ypres south of the highway, was taken. But before the shell-shattered patches called Glencorse Wood and Inverness Copse the enemy had massed strongly for defence; for they were the key of his whole position, and the attacking brigades—Lancashire, Irish, and Scots—clung with difficulty to their footing on the ridge, but could go no further. In the afternoon, when a downpour of rain had begun to fall, the enemy counter-attacked from south of the Menin road to north of St. Julien. In spite of poor visibility owing to the thick weather, our artillery held him, though we had to fall back from all but the western skirts of Westhoek. Our advanced troops north of St. Julien were also for the most part withdrawn to the line of the Steenbeek. By the evening the position was that everywhere we had carried the German first line, and had gained all the crest of the first ridge, and so denied the enemy observation over the Salient. From Westhoek to St. Julien we had taken the German second line, and north of St. Julien were well beyond it. On two-thirds of our front in the Salient we had won our first objectives, while, of the remaining third, we



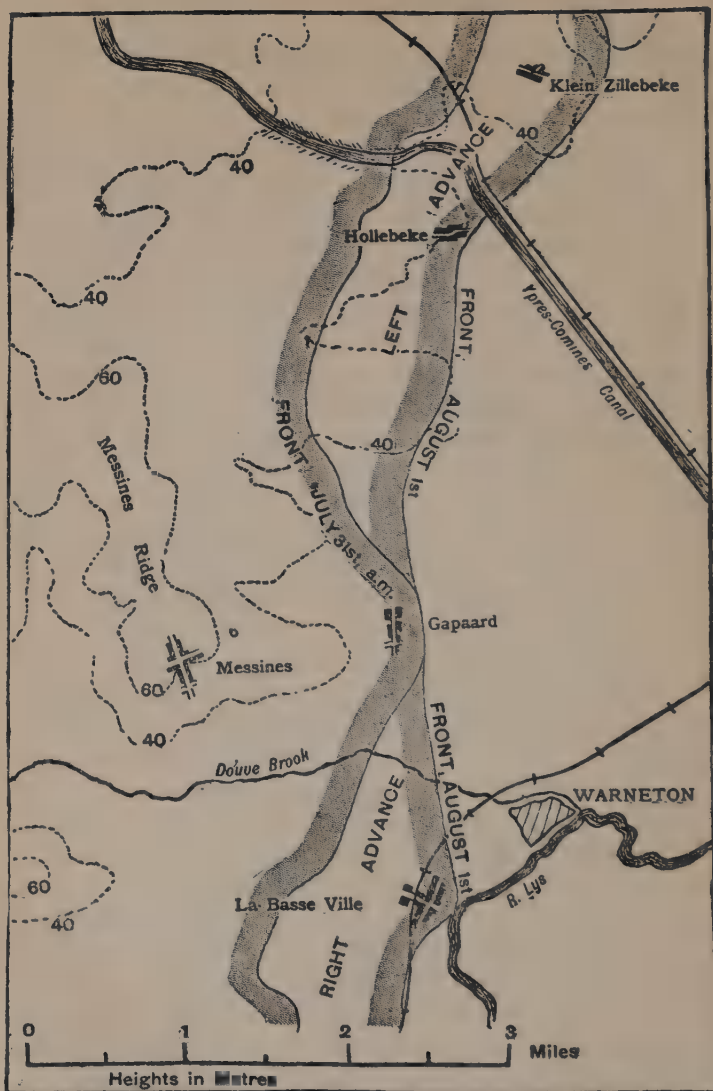
Advance of the First French and Fifth British Armies,
July 31, 1917.

had just fallen short of our extreme aim on one-half, and on the other had exceeded it. On the whole battlefield we had taken over 6,000 prisoners, including 133 officers. It was no small triumph for an attack in foul weather over some of the most difficult country in which armies ever fought.

The subsidiary action fought by the Second Army was an unbroken success. On the right, after a fifty minutes' struggle, the New Zealand Division had carried La Basse Ville. Northward as far as Hollebeke we confined ourselves to advancing our front a few hundred yards to a line of strong points and fortified farms. On Plumer's left English county troops from the Midlands and the West pushed half a mile down the valley of the Roosebeek, and on one side of the Ypres-Comines Canal took the village of Hollebeke, and on the other the rubble-heap which had been Klein Zillebeke. Once again after three years we held that classic soil where, at the close of a dark November day, Cavan's brigade of Guards and Kavanagh's dismounted Household Cavalry had turned the last wave of the German assault.

According to plan, the next day should have seen a second blow with cumulative force. But the weather had joined the enemy. From midday on 1st August for four days and four nights without intermission fell the rain. Even when it stopped on the 5th there followed days of sombre skies and wet mists and murky clouds. *Aug. 5.*

The misery of our troops, huddled in their impromptu lines or strung out in shell-holes, cannot be pictured in words. Nor can the supreme disappointment of the High Command. After months



Sketch showing ground won by the Second Army on July 31st.

of thought and weeks of laborious preparation, just when a brilliant start had been made, they saw their hopes dashed to the ground. An offensive was still possible, but it could not be the offensive planned. The time-schedule was fatally dislocated. The situation is best described in the unemotional words of Sir Douglas-Haig's dispatch:—

“The low-lying, clayey soil, torn by shells and sodden by rain, turned to a succession of vast muddy pools. The valleys of the choked and overflowing streams were speedily transformed into long stretches of bog, impassable except by a few well-defined tracks, which became marks for the enemy's artillery. To leave these tracks was to risk death by drowning, and in the course of the subsequent fighting on several occasions both men and pack animals were lost in this way. In these conditions operations of any magnitude became impossible, and the resumption of our offensive was necessarily postponed until a period of fine weather should allow the ground to recover. As had been the case in the Arras battle, this unavoidable delay in the development of our offensive was of the greatest service to the enemy. Valuable time was lost, the troops opposed to us were able to recover from the disorganization produced by our first attack, and the enemy was given the opportunity to bring up reinforcements.”

For a fortnight we held our hand. To advance was a stark impossibility till the countryside was a little drier, for though we had won positions on the heights, our communications ran through the spongy Salient. The enemy's counter-attacks were to some extent also crippled by the weather. Those on the

night of the first day of the battle were aimed at driving us off the high ground north of the Menin road, and regaining his second line system between Frezenberg and St. Julien. They failed to shake us ; but it was considered wise, in order to escape the heavy shelling, to withdraw our men temporarily from St. Julien itself, though we still held a bridge-head on the Steenbeek, north of the village. On

Aug. 3. 3rd August we reoccupied St. Julien, and consolidated our positions on the right bank of the Steenbeek by a line of points which linked us with the French. On 10th August

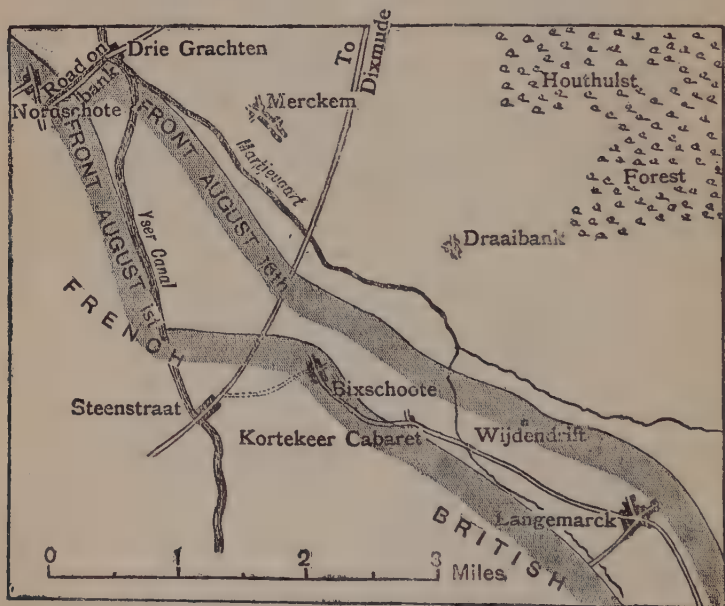
Aug. 10. we took the whole of Westhoek, and thereby won the last point in the old German second position which gave any chance of observation over Ypres. There the enemy counter-attacked violently and fruitlessly on the two following days. Meantime the French had cleared the ground around the Kortekeer Cabaret and its famous crossroads, and had forced their way well across the peninsula between the Yser Canal and the Martjevaart.

In the middle of the month there was a short break in the storms, and Sir Douglas Haig took advantage of it for a new attack. He began by a highly successful subsidiary action in the south, designed to threaten an important position of the enemy, and prevent him massing all his strength before the Salient. We have seen how, during the Battle of Arras and the lesser operations of July, the Canadian Corps had eaten into the defences of Lens from the south and south-west. The new attack came from the north-east, on a front of 4,000 yards, on a line south-east of Loos, running roughly

from the Lens-Bethune road to the Bois Hugo. On September 15, 1915, at the Battle of Loos, troops of the 15th Division had swarmed across Hill 70 east of the village, and some had even penetrated into Cité St. Auguste, the mining suburb of Lens beyond the railway line. The latter never returned, and Hill 70, after a gallant defence against odds, was relinquished before the close of the battle. Ever since then the place had been a thorn in our side, for it gave the enemy good observation. On 15th August, at 4.25 in the morning, the Canadians swept over Hill 70, and south *Aug. 15.* of it crossed the Lens-La Bassée road, and took the *faubourgs* of Cité St. Laurent and Cité St. Emile. North of it they won the little Bois Rasé and the western half of the Bois Hugo. All their objectives were gained, except a short length of trench west of Cité St. Auguste, which fell the following afternoon. During the morning of the 15th counter-attacks by the German local reserves were easily beaten off, and in the evening a division of the German Guard was thrown in without better success. They were caught in the open by the deadly rifle and machine-gun fire of the Canadians. From the three German divisions opposed to us that day we took 1,120 prisoners.

Next day, the 16th, saw the second stage of the Ypres struggle. The Fifth Army was directed against the German third posi- *Aug. 16.* tion, the Gheluvelt-Langemarck line, which ran from the Menin road along the second of the tiers of ridges which rimmed the Salient on the east. These tiers, the highest and most easterly of which was the famous Passchendaele crest, had the common features

that they all sprang from one southern boss or pillar, the point on the Menin road marked 64 metres, which we knew as Clapham Junction, and all as they ran northward lost elevation. The day was destined to show at its best von Armin's new defensive methods. The weather was still thick and damp, making aeroplane observation difficult, and there-



Gains on the Allied Left in the attack on August 16, 1917.

fore depriving us of timely notice of the enemy's counter-attacks. His front was sown with "pill-boxes," the tactical device which as yet we scarcely understood, and had not found a weapon to meet. The ground was sloppy, and made tangled and difficult with broken woods. The conditions were ideal

for the practice of that method which von Armin had foreshadowed at Messines and had now definitely embraced—that system of “elastic defence,” in the words of the official dispatch, “in which his forward trench lines were held only in sufficient strength to disorganize the attack, while the bulk of his forces were kept in close reserve, ready to deliver a powerful and immediate blow which might recover the positions overrun by our troops before we had had time to consolidate them.”

The attack took place at dawn, 4.45 a.m., and on the Allies' left and left centre had an immediate success. The French cleared the whole peninsula between the Yser Canal and the Martjevaart, and, wading through deep floods, captured the strongly fortified bridgehead of Drie Grachten. The British left pressed on beyond the Bixschoote-Langemarck road, and took the hamlet of Wijdendrift. At first they were checked in the outskirts of Langemarck; but by eight o'clock they held the village, and by nine they had won their final objective, the portion of the German third line system half a mile farther north.

Very different was the fate of the British centre. North and north-east of St. Julien, and between the Wieltje-Passenchdaele and the Ypres-Zonnebeke roads, they came up against the full strength of the “pill-boxes.” A number fell to us, and all day we struggled on in the mud, losing heavily from the concealed machine-gun fire. In some places our men reached their final objectives, but they could not abide in them. Enemy counter-attacks later in the morning forced us back, and at the close of the day we were little beyond our starting-point. Our

Langemarck gains were, however, secured, for the 55th West Lancashire Territorial Division had established a defensive flank on a line from east of Langemarck to north of St. Julien.

On the British right the fighting was still more desperate. On the Menin road we had already passed the highest point, Hill 64, and were moving on the wood of Herenthage, which we called Inverness Copse, and which lay on the slopes towards Gheluvelt. This wood was intersected by the highway, and north of it lay the Nuns' Wood, with its southern outlier, which we knew as Glencorse Wood. East of Glencorse Wood was the big Polygon Wood, with the remains of a racecourse in the heart of it. In all this area our advance was most stubbornly contested, and at the end of the day we had done no more than gain a fraction of the western edge of Glencorse Wood, and advance a little way north of Westhoek. Taking the battleground as a whole, as a result of the day we had made a considerable gap in the German third line, and taken over two thousand prisoners and thirty guns.

The rest of the month was one long downpour. We made a few small gains—notably on the 19th, 22nd, and 27th, when, with the assistance of Tanks, we improved our position on a two-mile front between St. Julien and the Ypres-Roulers railway, and took a number of strong points and fortified

Aug. 22. farms. On the 22nd we also attacked along the Menin road, and after six days' continuous fighting made some way in Glencorse Wood, and won the western edge of Inverness Copse.

This second stage of the battle was beyond doubt a serious British check. We had encountered a new

tactical device of the enemy, and it had defeated us. The Fifth Army had fought with the most splendid gallantry, but their courage had been largely fruitless. We had no doubt caused the enemy serious losses, but he had taken a heavier toll of our own ranks. Fine brigades had been hurled in succession against a concrete wall, and had been sorely battered. For almost the first time in the campaign there was a sense of discouragement abroad on our front. Men felt that they were being sacrificed blindly; that every fight was a soldiers' fight, and that such sledge-hammer tactics were too crude to meet the problem. For a moment there was a real ebb of confidence in British leadership. That such a feeling should exist among journalists and politicians matters nothing; but it matters much if it is found among troops in the field.

Sir Douglas Haig accordingly brought upon the scene the man who was rapidly coming to recognition as the most resourceful of army commanders. The front of the Second Army was extended northward, and Sir Herbert Plumer took over the attack upon the southern portion of the enemy front on the Menin road. The better part of a month was spent in preparation, while Plumer patiently thought out the problem. Sorely tried—too sorely tried—divisions were taken out of the line to rest, and the dispositions on the whole front of assault were readjusted. Especially our artillery tactics were revised, in order to cope with the "pill-boxes." In the early days of September the weather improved, and the sodden Salient began slowly to dry. That is to say, the mud hardened into something like the *séracs* of a glacier, and the streams became streams

again, and not lagoons. But the process was slow, and it was not till the third week of the month that the next stage in the battle could begin.

The new eight-mile front of attack ran from the Ypres-Staden railway north of Langemarck to the Ypres-Comines Canal north of Hollebeke. On the left and centre our objectives were narrowly limited, averaging about three-quarters of a mile; but Plumer on the right had the serious task of pushing for a mile along the Menin road. The "pill-box" problem had been studied, and a solution, it was believed, had been found, not by miraculous ingenuity, but by patience and meticulous care. The little fortalices had been methodically reconnoitred, and our heavy barrage so arranged as to cover each mark. Even when a direct hit was not attained, it was believed that the concussion of the great shells might loosen some of the lesser structures, while fumes, smoke, and gas would make the life of the inmates difficult. One famous division followed with complete success another plan. Having located the "pill-box," the field-gun barrage lengthened on both sides of it; which enabled the advancing troops, hugging their barrage, to get round its unprotected rear.

Wednesday, 19th September, was a clear blowing day, but at nine o'clock in the evening the rain began, and fell heavily all that night.
Sept. 19. At dawn the drizzle stopped, but a wet mist remained, which blinded our air reconnaissance.

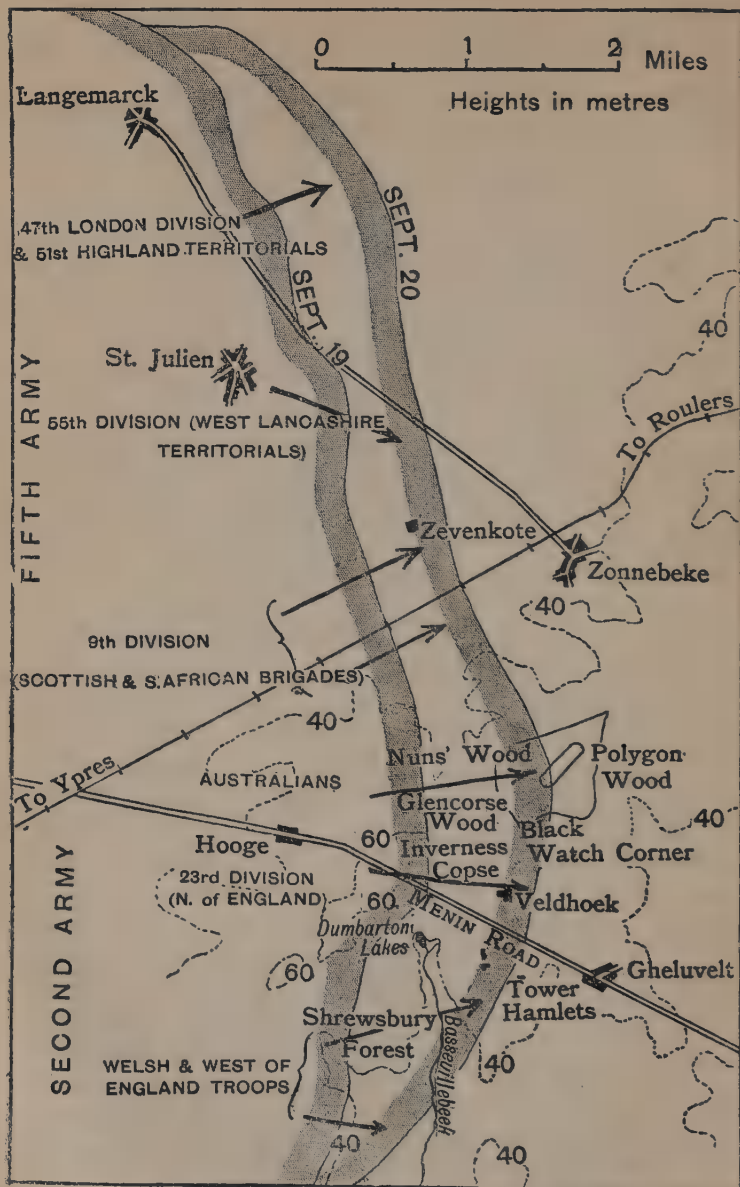
Sept. 20. At 5.40 a.m. on the 20th the attack was launched. Presently the fog cleared, and the sun came out, and our aeroplanes were able

to fight in line with the infantry, attacking enemy trenches and concentrations with machine-gun fire. The ground was knee-deep in mud, but the whole British line pressed forward. The Fifth Army's left north of the Zonnebeke-Langemarck road—the 47th London Division and the 51st Highland Territorials—won all its objectives by midday. South of them the 55th West Lancashire Territorials were not less successful in the appalling mud south-east of St. Julien. Perhaps the most remarkable achievement was that of the Scottish and South African brigades of the 9th Division, which, advancing on both sides of the Ypres-Roulers railway, won their final objectives in three hours. They carried a line of fortified farms, the two important redoubts called Zonnebeke and Bremen, and the hamlet of Zevenkote.

But the crux of the battle lay in the area of the Second Army, and the vital point was the work of its centre along the Menin road. There lay the key of the enemy's position, and there in defence he had already sent in sixteen divisions. That day the fighting was extended well south of the highroad. Plumer's right—Welsh and West of England troops—cleared the small woods north of the Ypres-Comines Canal. Farther north they pushed through the eastern fringe of Shrewsbury Forest, across the stream called the Bassevillebeek, which drains to the Lys, with its hideous cluster of ponds called Dumbarton Lakes, and up the slopes of the Tower Hamlets spur, on the eastern side of which lay Gheluvelt. Here they encountered heavy machine-gun fire from the ridge between Veldhoek and the Tower Hamlets. On the left the 23rd Division of English north-country troops had been brilliantly

0 1 2 Miles

Heights in metres



The British Advance, September 20, 1917.

successful. They had carried the whole of Inverness Copse, and had captured Veldhoek itself, as a result of which late in the day we were able to establish ourselves across the Tower Hamlets spur.

The Australians, on Plumer's left, had for their first task the clearing of the rest of Glencorse Wood and the Nuns' Wood. This they achieved early in the morning, and by 10 a.m. had taken Polygon veld, at the north-western corner of the great Polygon Wood. For a little they were held up at Black Watch Corner, at the south-western angle; but by midday they had passed it, and had secured the whole western half of the wood up to the race-course, thus reaching their final objectives.

This day's battle cracked the kernel of the German defence in the Salient. It showed a limited advance, and the total of 3,000 prisoners had been often exceeded in a day's fighting; but every inch of the ground won was vital. We had carried the southern pillar on which the security of the Passchendaele ridge depended. Few struggles in the campaign were more desperate, or carried out on a more gruesome battlefield. The maze of quagmires, splintered woods, ruined husks of "pill-boxes," water-filled shell-holes, and foul creeks which made up the land on both sides of the Menin road was a sight which to the recollection of most men must seem like a fevered nightmare. It was the classic soil on which during the First Battle of Ypres the 1st and 2nd Divisions had stayed the German rush for the Channel. Then it had been a broken but still recognizable and featured countryside; now the elements seemed to have blended with each other to make of it a limbo outside mortal

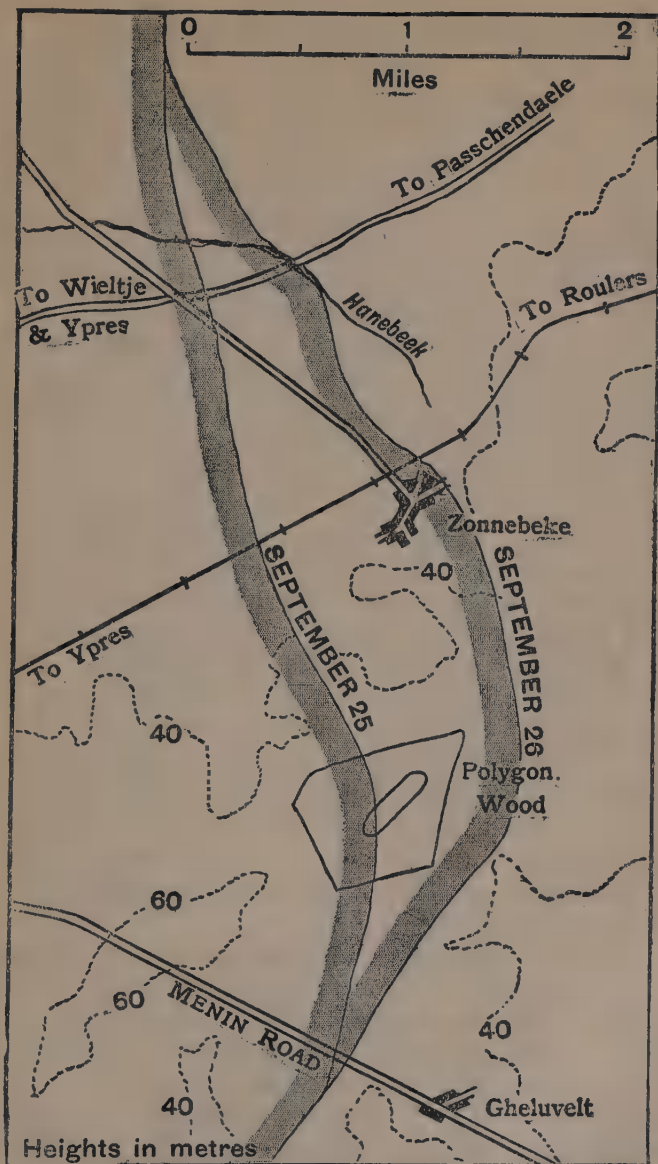
experience and almost beyond human imagining. Only on some of the tortured hills of Verdun could a parallel be found. The battle of 20th September was a proof of what heights of endurance the British soldier may attain to. It was an example, too, of how thought and patience may achieve success in spite of every disadvantage of weather, terrain, and enemy strength.

Von Armin could not accept meekly the losses of the 20th. That afternoon and evening he made no less than eleven counter-attacks. Most of them failed, but east of St. Julien he retook a farm which we did not win back till the next day. North-east of Langemarck a short length of German trench

Sept. 21. held out till the 23rd. On the 21st, and for the four days following, he attacked north-east of St. Julien, and very fiercely on the front between the Tower Hamlets and the Polygon

Sept. 25. Wood. On the 25th the Germans got into our lines north of the Menin road; but after a struggle of many hours, British and Australian troops succeeded in ejecting them. In the meantime preparations were being hastened on for the next stage. We had now won all the interior ridges of the Salient and the southern pillar; but we were not yet within striking distance of the north part of the main Passchendaele ridge. To attain this, we must lie east of Zonnebeke and the Polygon Wood at the foot of the final slopes. Moreover, we must act quickly. We were well aware that the enemy intended a counter-attack in force, and it was our object to anticipate him.

We struck again on 26th September. The



The British Advance, September 26, 1917.

weather was fine, and for a brief week it ceased to be an element in the German defensive.

Sept. 26. Our front of attack was the six-mile stretch from north-east of St. Julien to south of the Tower Hamlets. The new advance was as precise and complete as its predecessor of the 20th. At ten minutes to six our infantry moved forward. On our left the North Midlanders and a London Territorial division pushed on both sides of the Wieltje-Passchendaele road to the upper course of the Haanebeek. In the centre, after some sharp fighting along the Ypres-Roulers railway line, we took the ruins of Zonnebeke village—which had been the apex of the Salient when we evacuated it in May 1915. Further south the Australians carried the remainder of the Polygon Wood; while they also assisted the sorely tried British division on their right, which was struggling in the maze of creeks and trenches beyond Veldhoek. This division, though it had suffered one of the enemy's severest counterstrokes the day before, nevertheless was able to join in the general advance. One dramatic performance fell to its share. It was able to relieve two companies of Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, who had been isolated the night before, and had held out for twelve hours in the midst of the enemy.

The last days of fine weather were employed by the Germans in some of the most resolute counter-attacks of the battle. The troops which they had intended to use in their frustrated offensive of the 26th were now employed to undo the effects of our advance. There were seven attacks during the day, notably in the area between the Reutelbeek

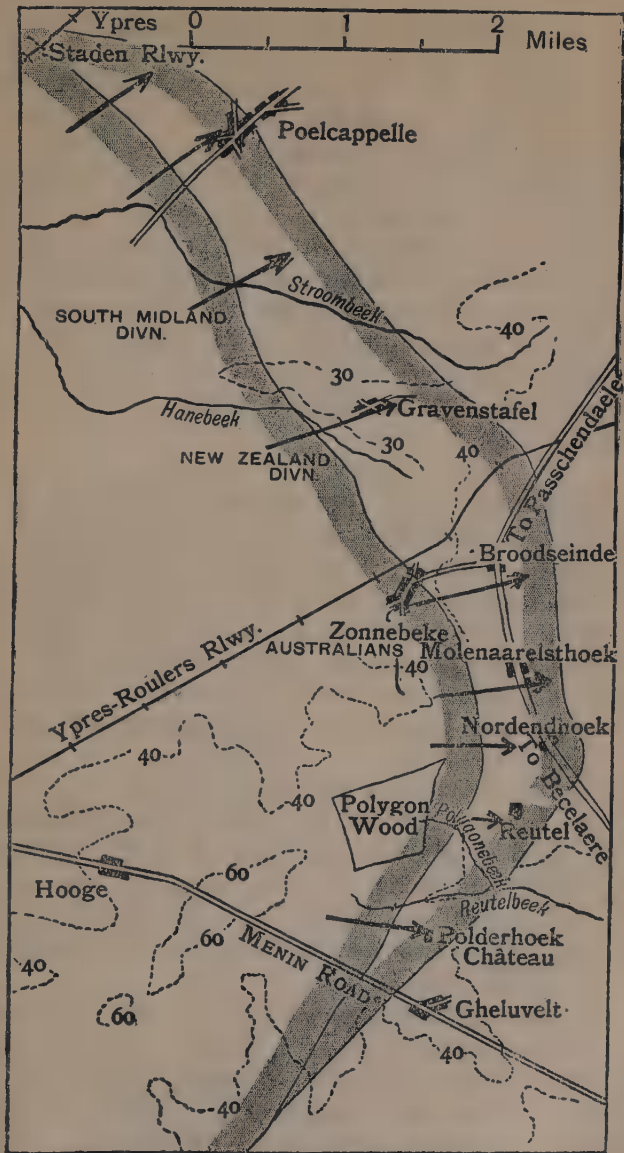
and the Polygon Wood. Then came a pause, while he collected his shattered strength; and on the last day of the month he began again with two *flammenwerfer* attacks north of the Menin road. Five more followed next day in the same place, and one south of the Roulers railway. Nothing came of them, except the temporary loss of two advanced posts south-east of the Polygon Wood. The last took place on 3rd October, close to the Menin road, but it was broken up by our guns before it reached our lines. Sept. 30.
Oct. 3.

That night the weather broke, and a gale from the south-west brought heavy rains. It was the old ill-luck of our army, for on the 4th we had planned the next stage of the battle. But if the weather was ill-timed, not so was our attack. The enemy had brought up three fresh divisions, with a view to recovering his losses of the 26th. Ten minutes past six was his zero hour, and by good fortune and good guiding six o'clock was ours. Our barrage burst upon his infantry when it was forming up for the assault, and cut great swathes in its ranks. While the Germans were yet in the confusion of miscarried plans our bayonets were upon them. Oct. 4.

Our objective was the line of the main ridge east of Zonnebeke, the southern part of what was called the Passchendaele heights, along which ran the north road from Becelaere. Our main front was the seven miles from the Ypres-Staden railway to the Menin road, though we also advanced a short distance south of that highway. By midday every objective had been gained. The achievement of Messines and the first day of Arras was repeated.

The enemy, caught on the brink of an attack of his own, was not merely repulsed; a considerable part of his forces was destroyed.

The British left was directed along the Poelcapelle road, in a country so nearly flat that the chief feature was a hill marked 19 metres. After a sharp struggle we won this position, lost it, and regained it before evening. Further south we entered Poelcapelle village, and occupied its western half. The valley of the Stroombeek was a sea of mud, but the South Midland Division forced their way across it. In our centre lay the area of the projected German attack—the Gravenstafel ridge jutting west from the Passchendaele heights, and the central part of the heights themselves. The New Zealand Division, struggling across the swamps of the Upper Haanebeek, took the village of Gravenstafel and won the crest of the spur. On their right, the Australians carried Molenaarelsthoeck and Broodseinde, and drove the 4th Prussian Guards from the ridge summit, pressing beyond the Becelaire-Passchendaele road. Southward, again, British troops traversed the crest and took Noordemdhoeck, while the division on their right took the village of Reutel and cleared the tangled ground east of the Polygon Wood. Thence as far as the Menin road there was desperate fighting in the hollows of the Reutelbeek and the Polygonbeek, where men of South England and the Scottish Borders stormed the Polderhoek Château. A little after midday we had gained all our final objectives. We had broken up forty German battalions, and had taken over 5,000 prisoners, including 138 officers. The counter-attacks which followed—there were no less than

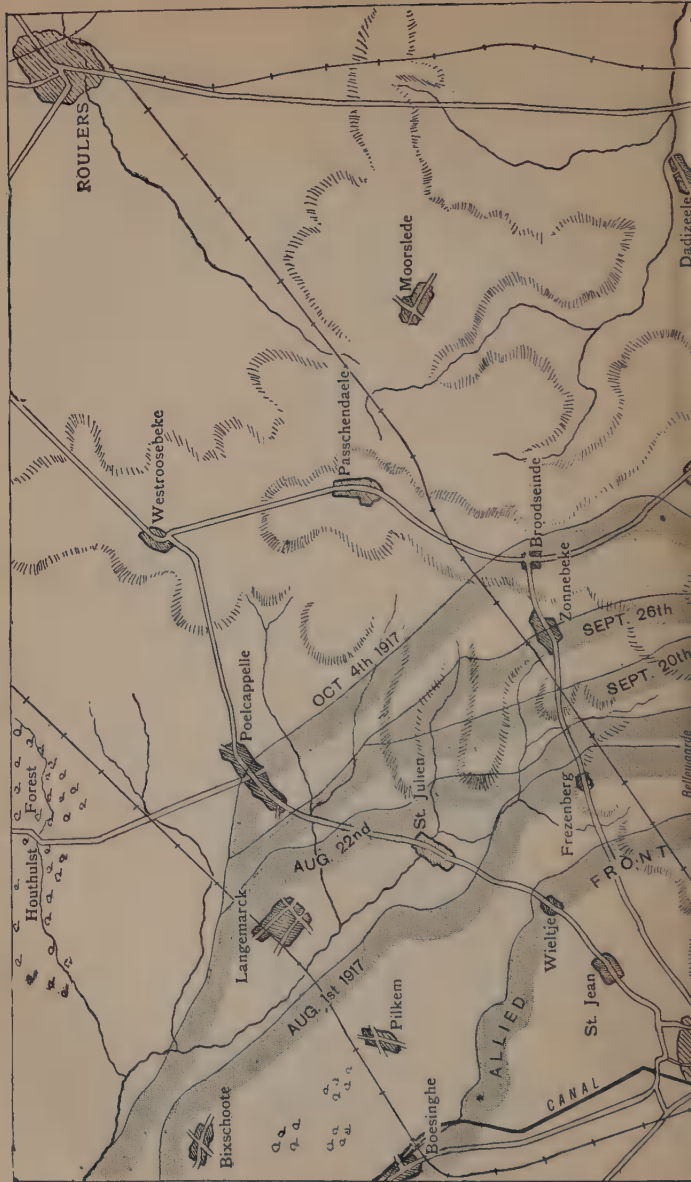


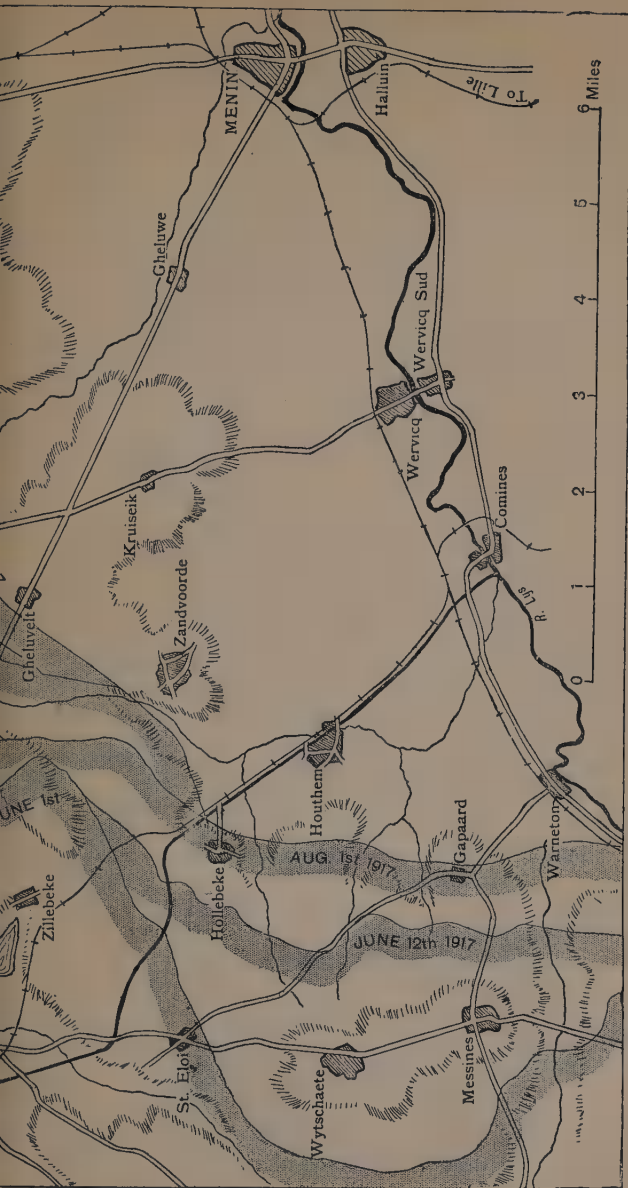
The British Advance, October 4, 1917.

eight between the Menin road and Reutel—won back little ground. From Mount Sorrel, in the south, we held 9,000 yards of the crest of the ultimate ridge, and our grip of the Gravenstafel spur gave us a good defensive flank on the north. Above all, we had succeeded in nullifying von Armin's tactics of defence; and we captured documents which made it plain that the German High Command were wavering, and inclined to a return to their old method of holding their front line in force. Sir Herbert Plumer's leadership had been abundantly justified.

But October had set in, storm followed storm, and Sir Douglas Haig had to reconsider his plan of campaign. Weather and a dozen other malignant accidents had wrecked the larger scheme of a Flanders offensive. Gone was the hope of clearing the coast or of driving the enemy out of his Flemish bases. What had been laboriously achieved at the end of ten weeks had been in the programme for the first fortnight. It was only a preliminary; the main objectives lay beyond the Passchendaele ridge. The weather had compelled us to make our advance by stages, widely separated in time, with the result that the enemy had been able to bring up his reserves and reorganize his defence. Our pressure could not be cumulative, and we had been unable to reap the full fruits of each success.

There was, therefore, no chance of any decisive operation in the Flanders area. The success of Cadorna on the Bainsizza plateau, which we shall consider later, had unsettled the minds of certain civilian statesmen, and given rise to a scheme,





The country between the Ypres Salient and the Roulers-Menin Line, showing the progress of the Ypres Offensive up to the first week of October 1917.

mooted about this time, for sending British and French reserves to the Isonzo front, in the hope of striking a final blow at Austria. This highly divergent operation was, fortunately, rejected; but it was a serious question for Sir Douglas Haig whether the Ypres operations should be continued. If October should show the kind of weather which it had yielded the year before on the Somme, the Salient would be an ugly fighting ground. The extremity of Russia was permitting more and more German divisions to be transferred to the West; which would not make our task easier. On the other hand, we had not won the last even of the limited preliminary objectives; for we did not control the whole Passchendaele ridge, and it might well be urged that, till we did, we had not secured our own position or made difficult the enemy's against the coming winter. Moreover, the French were preparing a great attack on the Aisne heights for the last week of the month, and it was desirable that the German mind should be kept engrossed with the northern front. Balancing the pros and cons of the matter, Sir Douglas Haig resolved to continue his offensive till the end of October, or such time as would give our men the chance of reaching Passchendaele.

The last stages of the Third Battle of Ypres were probably the muddiest combats ever known in the history of war. It rained incessantly—sometimes clearing to a drizzle or a Scots mist, but relapsing into a downpour on any day fixed for our attack. The British movements became an accurate barometer: whenever it was more than usually tempestuous it was safe to assume that some zero hour

was near. Tuesday, the 9th, was the day fixed

Oct. 9. for an advance on a broad front by both French and British; but all day on the 7th and 8th it rained, and the night of the 8th was black darkness above and a melting earth beneath. It was a difficult task assembling troops under such conditions; but the thing was accomplished, and at twenty minutes past five in the dripping dawn of the 9th our infantry moved forward. The operations of the 4th had bulged our centre between Poelcapelle and Becelaere, and it was necessary to bring up our left wing. Hence, though we attacked everywhere from the Polygon Wood northward, our main effort was on the six miles from a point east of Zonnebeke to the north-west of Lange-marck; while the French, on our left, continued the front of assault to the edge of the St. Jansbeek, south of Draaibank.

In the north the French and the British Guards Division, advancing side by side, had won all their objectives by the early afternoon. They crossed the St. Jansbeek, carried the hamlets of St. Janshoek, Mangelaere, Veldhoek, and Koekuit, and established themselves on the skirts of the great Houthulst Forest, the northern pillar of the German line. South of the Ypres-Staden railway English divisions fought their way east of the Poelcapelle-Houthulst road, and captured the whole of the ruins of Poelcapelle. In the centre the Australians and British Territorial troops—the latter from Yorkshire, Lancashire, and the Southern Midlands—moved nearer to Passchendaele along the main ridge, taking the hamlets of Nieuwemolen and Keerselaarhoek. The day was successful, for our

final objectives were almost everywhere attained, and over 2,000 prisoners were taken.

It was Sir Douglas Haig's intention to press on the advance, for the weather and the landscape were such that there was less hardship in going on than in staying still in lagoons and shell-craters, where



Ground gained on the Allied Left in October.

comfort or security was unattainable. The next attack was fixed for Friday, the 12th; but the rain fell in sheets during the night of the 11th, and the movement was countermanded soon after it had begun. Nevertheless we made some progress between the Roulers railway and Houthulst Forest, and 1,000 prisoners were taken.

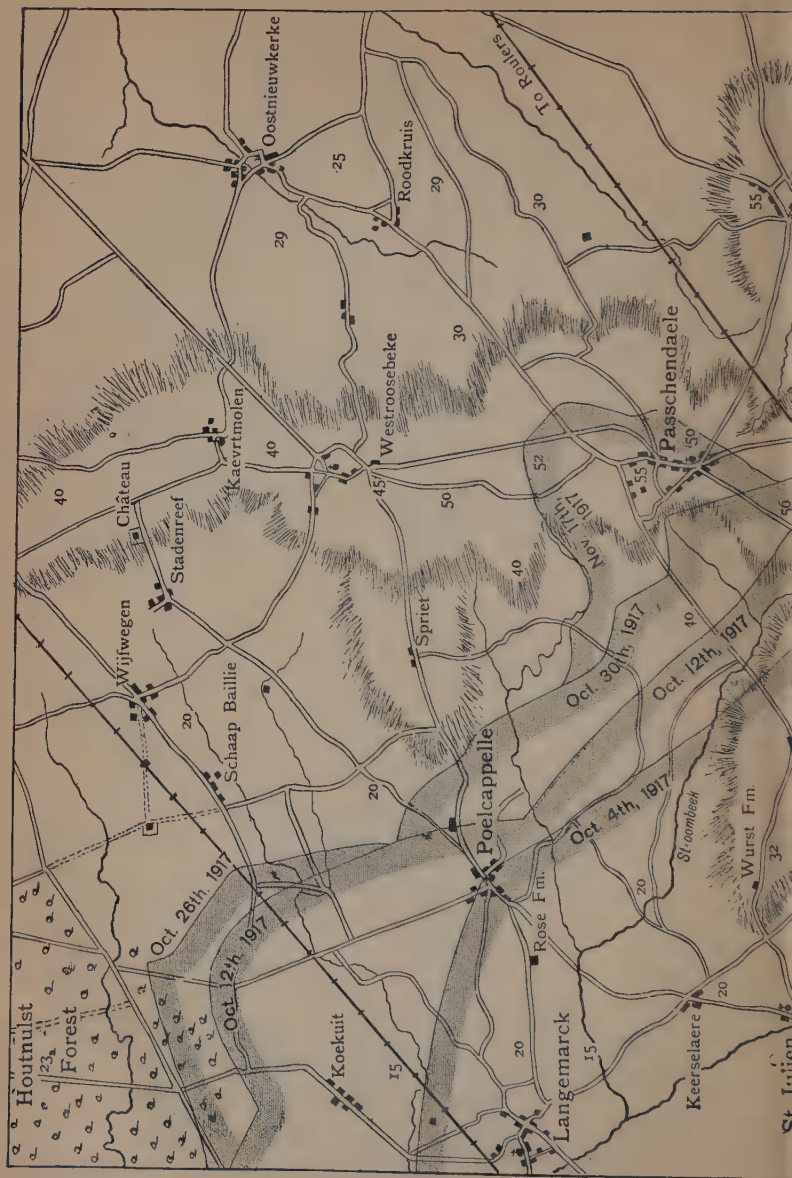
Oct. 12.

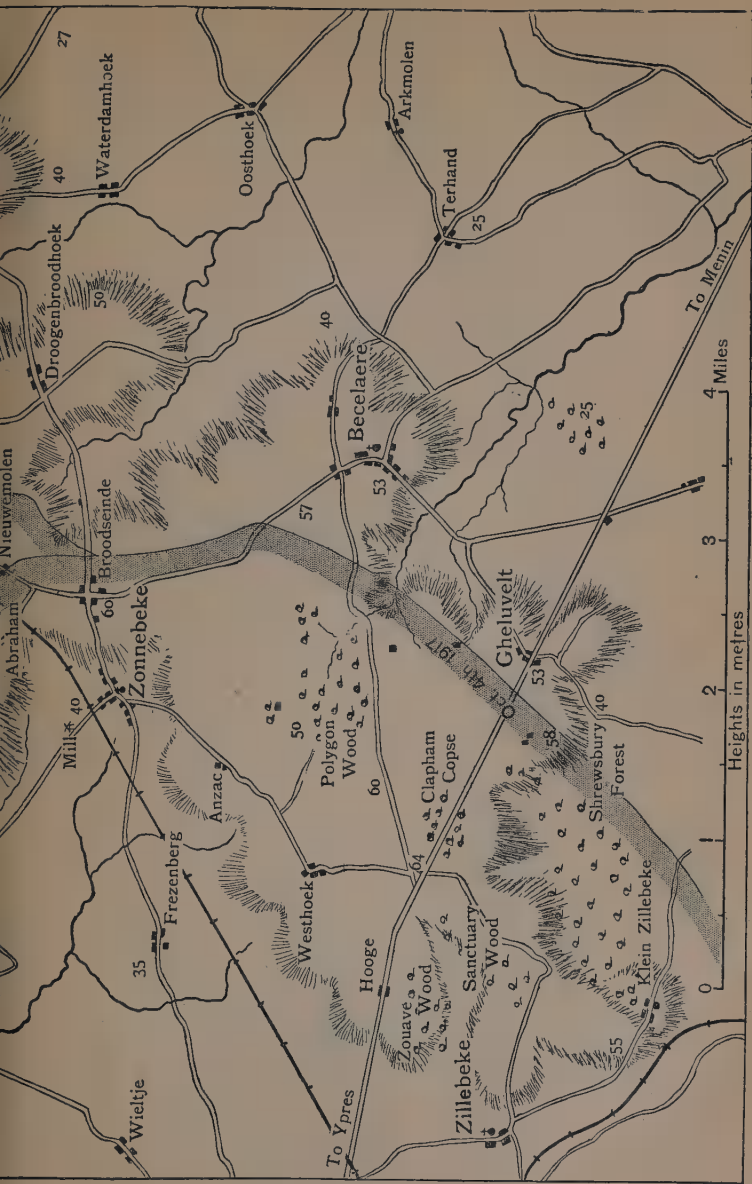
Such fighting was the last word in human misery, for the country was now one irreclaimable bog, and the occasional hours of watery sunshine had no power to dry it. "You might as well," wrote one correspondent, "try to empty a bath by holding lighted matches over it." But Sir Douglas Haig still kept his eye on Passchendaele, and, moreover, he was maturing another plan of operations far in the south, which made it imperative to sustain the northern pressure for a week or two. Also there was the French attack on the Aisne heights now drawing very near. So the battle among the shell-holes and swamps still continued.

On the 22nd we pushed east of Poelcapelle, and crept a little farther into the Houthulst Wood. On

Oct. 22- the 25th we had a stroke of fortune, for
26. a strong wind blew from the west which slightly hardened the ground. On the

26th the rain returned, but at a quarter to six in the morning we attacked on a front from the Roulers railway to beyond Poelcapelle. From Passchendaele the Bellevue spur runs westward, and between it and the Gravenstafel spur is the valley of a brooklet called the Ravebeek, a tributary of the Stroombeek. Along this stream the Canadian troops moved against the main ridge, and won the little hill just south of Passchendaele village. Their left had a hard struggle on the Bellevue spur, where the old main Staden-Zonnebeke line of the German defences ran; but the place was carried in the afternoon at the second attempt, and by the evening the Canadians held all their objectives. On the left of the Canadians the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division and a division of London Territorials continued the advance in the





The Passchendaele Ridge.

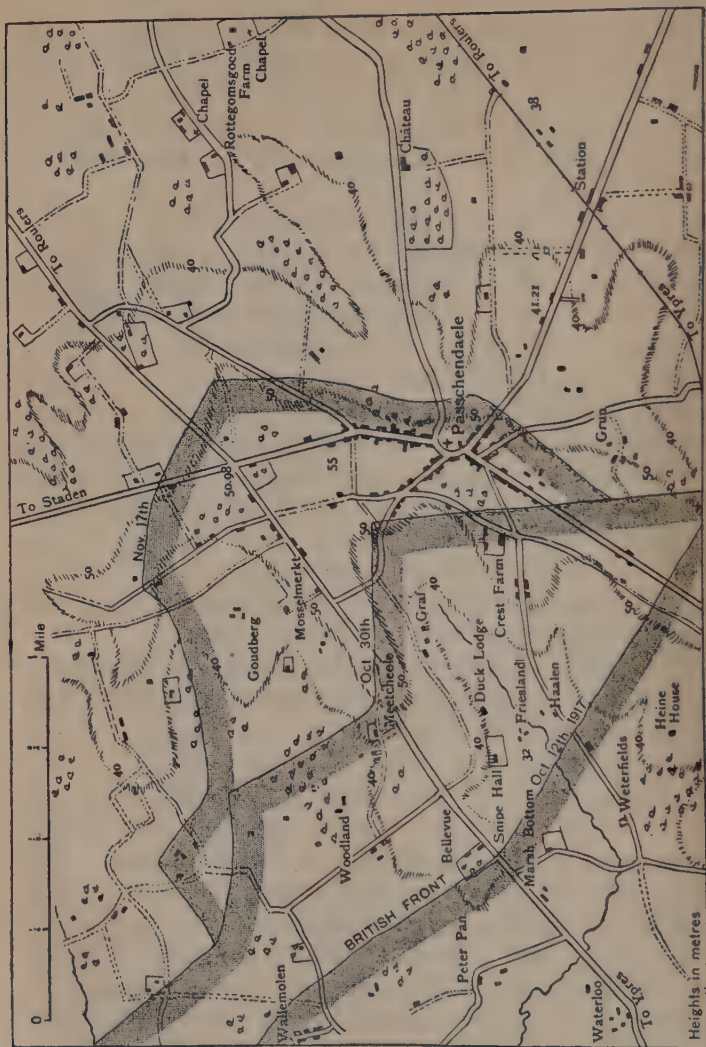
low-lying ground north of the Bellevue ridge. That day on our right British troops entered Gheluvelt for the first time since the First Battle of Ypres. Their rifles, however, were choked with mud, and they were compelled to withdraw before the enemy's counter-attack.

On that day, the 26th, the French on our left were busy bridging the St. Jansbeek, in its lower course west of Draaibank. Their object was to clear the ground called the Merckem peninsula, between the Blankaart Lake, the Martjevaart or St. Jansbeek, and the Yser Canal. On the 27th they were in action along with the Belgians on their left, who crossed the Yser at Knockehoek. The Allies won the villages of Aschhoop, Kippe, and Merckem, and reached the southern shore of the Blankaart Lake. By the morning of the 28th the whole of the Merckem peninsula had been cleared of the enemy. This success menaced from the west the Forest of Houthulst.

Oct. 28.

On 30th October came the attack on Passchendaele itself. At 5.50 a.m., in a clear, cold dawn, the Canadians attacked from the top of the Ravebeek valley and along the crest of the ridge, while the London Territorials and the Royal Naval Division moved up the Paddebeek rivulet which runs north of the Bellevue spur. At ten in the morning the rain began again, and the strength of the enemy position, and the desperate resistance of the 5th and 11th Bavarian Divisions which held it, made the day one of the severest in the battle. The Canadians won Crest Farm, south of the village, and carried also the spur west of the village, and held it against five counter-attacks.

Oct. 30.



Paschendaele.

They forced their way into the outskirts of Passchendaele; but the appalling condition of the Paddebeek valley prevented the Londoners and the Royal Naval Division from advancing far, so that the Canadian front formed a sharp salient.

But the end was not far off. Some days of dry weather followed, during which small advances were made to improve our position. At 6 a.m. on Tuesday, 6th November, the Canadians swept forward again, carried the whole of Pass- *Nov. 6.*

chendaele, and pushed northward to the Goudberg spur. Four days later they increased their gains, so that all the vital part of the main ridge of West Flanders was in British hands. We dominated the enemy's hinterland in the flats towards Roulers and Thourout, and he had the prospect of a restless winter under our direct observation. The Third Battle of Ypres had wiped out the Salient where for three years we had been at the mercy of the German guns.

The great struggle which we have described was strategically a British failure. We did not come within measurable distance of our major purpose, and that owing to no fault of generalship or fighting virtue, but through the maleficence of the weather in a terrain where weather was all in all. We gambled upon a normal August, and we did not get it. The sea of mud which lapped around the Salient was the true defence of the enemy. Consequently the battle, which might have had a profound strategic significance in the campaign, became merely an episode in the war of attrition, a repetition of the Somme tactics, though conspicuously less successful

and considerably more costly than the fighting of 1916. Since 31st July we had taken 24,065 prisoners, 74 guns, 941 machine guns, and 138 trench mortars. We had drawn in seventy-eight German divisions, of which eighteen had been engaged a second or a third time. But, to set against this, our own losses had been severe, and the enemy had now a big reservoir for reinforcements. Already forty fresh divisions had been transferred to the West from the Russian front, apart from drafts of men to replace losses in other units.

The outstanding fact of the battle was the superb endurance and valour of the new armies of Britain, fighting under conditions which for horror and misery had scarcely been paralleled in war. To them the Commander-in-Chief paid a worthy tribute :—

“ Throughout the northern operations our troops have been fighting over ground every foot of which is sacred to the memory of those who, in the First and Second Battles of Ypres, fought and died to make possible the victories of the armies which to-day are rolling back the tide stayed by their sacrifices. It is no disparagement of the gallant deeds performed on other fronts to say that, in the stubborn struggle for the line of hills which stretches from Wytschaete to Passchendale, the great armies that to-day are shouldering the burden of our Empire have shown themselves worthy of the regiments which, in October and November of 1914, made Ypres take rank for ever amongst the most glorious of British battles.”

Ypres was to Britain what Verdun was to France—the hallowed soil which called forth the highest virtue

of her people. It was a battleground where there could be no failure without loss of honour. The armies which fought there in the autumn of 1917 were very different from the few divisions which had held the fort during the earlier struggles. But there were links of connection. The Guards, by more than one resistless advance, were recompensed for the awful tension of October 1914, when at Gheluvelt and Klein Zillebeke some of their best battalions had been destroyed. And it fell to Canada, by the crowning victory at Passchendaele, to avenge the gas attack of April 1915, when only her dauntless two brigades stood between Ypres and the enemy.

The battlefield of the old Salient was now as featureless as the Sahara or the mid-Atlantic. All landmarks had been obliterated; the very ridges and streams had changed their character. The names which still crowded the map had no longer any geographical counterpart. They were no more than measurements on a plane, as abstract as the points of the mathematician. It was war bared to the buff, stripped of any of the tattered romance which has clung to older fields. And yet in its very grossness it was war sublimated, for the material appanages had vanished. The quaint Flemish names belonged not now to the solid homely earth; they seemed rather points on a spiritual map, marking advance and retreat in the gigantic striving of the souls of peoples.

CHAPTER CXLII.

GERMANY RESHUFFLES HER CARDS.

Germany's Political Offensive—The Stockholm Conference—Its Breakdown—Mr. Arthur Henderson's Resignation—The British Labour Vote rescinded—Reactions in Germany—The German Reformers take Heart—Erzberger's Speech—Fall of von Bethmann-Hollweg—His Character—Reichstag Resolution of 19th July—Michaelis appointed Chancellor—His Incompetence—Von Kuhlmann at the Foreign Office—His "Peace Atmosphere"—The Vatican Note—President Wilson's Reply—State of German Opinion—Von Freytag-Loringhoven's Book—The Reichstag Meeting in October—Resignation of Michaelis—Count Hertling appointed Chancellor—Meaning of the Appointment.

THE student who sought to follow German policy during the war was not embarrassed with an over-richness of material. The nation was so well disciplined that it was hard to tell when a speech or a press article represented a genuine movement of opinion, or was only a move in a diplomatic game. The Main Committee of the Reichstag, where the more important discussions took place, sat in secret session, and reports of its doings leaked out only by accident. Hence the sequence of German politics must be judged mainly by events which were apparent to all the world—the fall of a minister, an official pronouncement, and machinations in neutral countries where disclosure soon or late was certain. Yet, in spite of the mist,

the outlines were unmistakable. Events beyond her eastern frontier had forced upon Germany a new orientation of policy, if she was to keep her own people in hand and pluck the fruit which the fates had generously offered. We have already seen her efforts in Russia itself to promote the anarchic elements in the revolution. But it was also her business to take advantage of the new wave of Jacobinism in order to embarrass the Allies by emphasizing those elements in their government and purpose which were least Jacobinical. Like Mithridates* in Asia Minor, on behalf of her own satrapy she was ready to preach the Social Revolution. It was a delicate game, for she had no desire to rouse among her own tame people the furies she would fain release elsewhere. It is the aim of this chapter to consider Germany in the rôle of virtuous democrat, the junker masquerading in the cap of liberty.

We have seen that early in April the moribund *Internationale* woke into activity. "Moribund" is, perhaps, a wrong term, for it had never been really alive. Transferred from Brussels to the Hague after the outbreak of war, it had been a means for the self-advertisement of the Dutch Germanophil, Troelstra, and the Belgian Huysmans, who was not recognized by his countrymen. It issued invitations for a Socialist Conference at Stockholm, and a Dutch Scandinavian Committee was formed under the presidency of Branting, the leader of the Swedish Socialists, and the most generally respected figure in his party in Europe since the death of Jaurès. His sympathies were strongly on the Allied side, and, though he was not responsible for the original

* See Reinach, *Mithridate Eupator*, 184.

invitations, he set to work to make the Conference a practical thing.

During May the delegations began to arrive, and were received in audience by the Standing Committee. The Conference had suddenly assumed a new importance, owing to the insistence upon it by the leaders of the Russian Revolution as the first step towards the clarifying of the issues of the war. Austrian, Hungarian, and Bulgarian delegations came, and a curious group of Bohemians who were entirely repudiated by the Czech Socialist party. These deputies from enemy countries were to all intents and purposes emissaries of their Governments with a mission to propose schemes which would do the utmost damage to the Allies and the least to the Central Powers. Early in June came the delegation of the German Majority Socialists, which included—besides Scheidemann, the Majoritarian leader—that Hermann Müller who, on the eve of the declaration of war, had invited the French Socialists to vote against war credits. The programme which they circulated announced that Germany had fought only a defensive war; that the Allies, and especially Britain, were the aggressors; and that imperialism was the cause of all the trouble—imperialism of the Allied and not of the Teutonic brand.

Meantime the Conference was being hotly discussed outside Scandinavia. The French Socialist party began by refusing the invitation, and British Labour stuck to the resolution of the Manchester Congress that there could be no relation with enemy Socialists so long as the invaded countries were not evacuated. But the Russian situation began to raise difficulties. The Soviets continued to press for a

conference, and to repeat their formula, "No annexations or indemnities," without any attempt at a further definition. It was obvious that this attitude of the leading practitioners of applied Socialism must weaken the original steadiness of the Allied refusal. The French delegates, MM. Moutet and Cachin, returned from Russia at the end of May, and secured a vote of the French National Council in favour of going to Stockholm—not, indeed, to sit with enemy delegates, but to have a separate meeting with the Standing Committee. On 1st June M. Ribot announced that his Gov-

ernment would refuse to grant passports for any such purpose. In Britain the situation was slightly different. No Labour Congress acknowledged the Conference, though the pacifist minority, the Independent Labour Party, would fain have attended. This the Government refused to permit; but on 8th June Lord Robert Cecil declared that passports would be granted to the delegates whom the Russian Soviets had invited to Petrograd, on the understanding that the holders did not take part in any international conference at Stockholm, or communicate directly or indirectly with enemy subjects. The concession was idle, for the British Seamen's and Firemen's Union, full of bitterness at German submarine atrocities, refused to allow the delegates to leave British shores.

The proceedings at Stockholm during June were not calculated to induce more harmony in the re-born *Internationale*. It was found impossible to agree upon any formula, and the German delegates issued a programme which revealed most brazenly the farce of their whole position. They put in the forefront

no annexations and no indemnities, and interpreted the latter phrase as excluding restitution for the ravages of war. They were willing to safeguard the independence of the states which had lost it during the war, such as Belgium and Serbia, and of the states which had regained it during the war, such as Russian Poland and Finland; and they insisted upon independence for those peoples still in slavery—namely, Ireland, India, and the dependencies generally of Britain, France, Italy, and Japan. They declined to regard Alsace-Lorraine as a special nationality, and they made no reference to the subject peoples of Austria, Germany, and Turkey. Their programme was not far removed from von Bethmann-Hollweg's appeal to the War Map, the old doctrine of *beati possidentes*. Whatever Stockholm failed to do, it made the position of the Scheidemann party abundantly clear. They had come as Government emissaries, and they departed after completing their mission, precisely like diplomats who had fulfilled their instructions.

So far there had only been preliminary meetings, at which France, Britain, Italy, and America had not appeared. The Standing Committee proposed a plenary conference for August, at which Russia should be represented, and four missionaries of the Soviets toured Western Europe to prepare the ground. It was at once apparent to those who made their acquaintance that the four made no distinction between enemy and Allied Socialists; that they were not interested in the question of the responsibility for war; that they did not think in terms of nationalities at all; and that their sole object was to prepare an international machinery

for the class war which was their serious ideal. Presently it appeared that Western Socialists were hopelessly divided upon these and kindred questions. A large number refused to meet representatives of enemy countries while the war lasted. Of those who were in favour of going to Stockholm, some wished only a consultative conference, while others wished its resolutions to be binding ; some sought to have the question of the responsibility for the war put in the forefront ; some wished to meet enemy delegates only to indict them ; some were willing to postpone the indictment to the end, provided that the Conference decided on the question of guilt before it rose. On the matter of policy, one section believed that if the Conference once sat the Germans would entangle it in barren discussions and split the Allied unity ; another section considered that any conference would lead to the revelation and condemnation of German pretensions. The small pacifist section in France and Britain welcomed Stockholm as a step towards the realization of their desires, since in their view any peace was just, and all war unjust.

While opinion was thus confused, Mr. Arthur Henderson returned from Petrograd. Originally he had been strongly opposed to the idea of Stockholm, but his stay in Russia had convinced him that something must be done to conciliate the extremists of the Soviets if Kerenski was to remain in power. He also held that a conference would result in an exposure of Germany which would strengthen the hands of the democracies opposing her. Mr. Henderson was one of the most trusted leaders of British Labour ; he had been unswerving in his support

of the war, and he had first-hand experience of the Russian situation. His views were, therefore, entitled to all respect. Unfortunately he forgot, as a member of the War Cabinet, what was due to his colleagues. The British Government had already declared explicitly against Stockholm on any terms. Mr. Henderson accompanied the Russian delegates to Paris to discuss with the French Socialists the conditions on which they should go to Stockholm. The French majority and the Russians decided that the resolutions should be binding ; Mr. Henderson and his British colleagues insisted that the meeting should only be consultative. On 10th August the

Aug. 10. special conference of the British Labour Party in London, by a majority of 1,296,000 votes, declared that the invitation to Stockholm should be accepted, but only on condition that the Conference was consultative and not mandatory. This resolution was obtained mainly by Mr. Henderson's influence ; and it was not easy to see its point, for it accepted a conference on terms which the Russians and the French majority had expressly declined. Next day Mr. Henderson resigned his seat in the War Cabinet, and was succeeded by Mr. G. N. Barnes.

There seemed much to be said at the time for Mr. Henderson's view of the tactical value of a conference, properly handled, to the Allied cause. Subsequent events were to make it plain that these arguments were not substantial. The German delegates did not mean business, and would have declined to be forced into the debating *impasse* which their enemies had intended for them ; while it was soon apparent that no conference on any terms could

have seriously checked the rising tide of anarchy in Russia. Moreover, Western Socialism was not really in love with the project. It was preponderatingly national and patriotic, and only a small minority hankered for the *Internationale*. Ten days after the first vote of the British Labour Party, a second congress saw the miners

Aug. 20.

change front and the majority for Stockholm drop to a handful, while it refused the smaller Socialist sections, which were the most keenly interested, the right of separate representation. On 4th September the Trades Union Congress at Blackpool, by a majority of nearly three millions, affirmed the necessity of an international Labour Conference as a preliminary to a lasting peace, but declared that any international conference at the present moment was undesirable.

Sept. 4.

So much for the Stockholm card on which, in the spring and early summer, Germany had staked largely. It had failed, because the ingenious *politique* had found himself faced by earnest and intransigent idealists who did not talk the same language. But it had produced certain curious reactions within Germany herself. In June Scheidemann was back in Berlin, expounding to his masters the situation as he had found it. It may be assumed that he told his Government that, if they wished to drive a wedge into the democracies opposed to them, they must undertake some showy measures of reform. Other reasons were present to support this counsel. Unless German bureaucracy softened its voice, and spoke smooth things of liberty and peace, it would alienate its new and unconscious allies, the Russian extremists, and so frustrate that primary

object of German policy, the break-up of the Russian army and the decomposition of the Russian state. Again, there was trouble brewing with Austria, who, under her new monarch, seemed to be moving towards an inconsequent Liberalism, and was prepared to lighten the ship by jettisoning some of the most cherished policies of her German taskmaster. The Emperor Charles had been engaging in secret overtures to France, in which he showed himself prepared to bargain with territory in German hands—overtures which, when disclosed a year later, did not endear him to the Berlin Court. Finally, in Germany itself there was a growing desire for reform. There had always been a sickly plant of that species, but during the first years of war it had shrivelled and died down. Now there had come reviving showers from the East. Even the well-disciplined German proletariat could not be wholly insensitive to the amazing things which were astir beyond the Dvina. They had suffered and endured greatly; they had been shorn, and had been dumb before their shearers; but they were beginning to find a voice. No sophistry could disguise the fact that they had an unduly small share in the government of their country, and it was unpleasant to be held up in a world of free men as the only slaves. The phenomenon was something far short of conversion. It was a stirring in sleep rather than an awakening. But the shrewd masters of Germany were not willing to risk an outbreak if a judicious anodyne could be administered, the more especially as the drug which was a soothing syrup at home might be made a fiery irritant for their enemies.

The need was intensified by the passionate general desire for peace, and a speedy peace. The dis-

comfort of the land had become appalling. Arras and Messines had not been cheering, and the situation in Russia had not developed sufficiently to ease the strain. The submarine campaign, from which so much had been promised, had failed to give the expected results. German foreign policy, as shown by the rupture with America, and the bungling intrigues in Mexico and Switzerland, had been one long series of fiascoes. Moreover, forebodings as to the economic future after the war were drawing in like a dark cloud about the minds of the captains of industry and the trading classes, and the gloom was infecting the humbler folk who depended upon them for their livelihood. It was realized that the Russian formula of "peace without annexations" might be used to save German credit, and to secure her in her most vital gains from the war, while at the same time it would be in tune with the democratic jargon fashionable among her opponents. Only a few hot-head extremists seemed to stand between the German people and that peace which they so gravely needed.

It was in the Reichstag itself that the storm broke. The great governing parties, apart from the Conservatives on the extreme right and the Minority Socialists on the extreme left, were the Catholic Centre, the Radicals, the National Liberals, and the Majority Socialists. In May, when the Imperial Chancellor had refused to state his peace terms, he had been supported by a *bloc* consisting of the Centre, the Radicals, and the National Liberals. Now the *bloc* suddenly added to itself the Majority Socialists, and so embraced two-thirds of the whole Reichstag, and, instead of supporting the Chan-

cellor, it went into opposition. The immediate occasion was a speech delivered in the secret session

July 6. on Friday, 6th July, by Herr Erzberger, the leader of the democratic wing of the Catholic Centre. Himself a man of no great strength, an emotional *frondeur*, who in the earlier part of the war had been an active propagandist in German Switzerland, he was probably only a tool in the business. Austria and the Vatican pulled the strings by which he moved. He attacked the Government with great candour and vehemence, criticizing the conduct of the war and emphasizing the failure of the submarine. He demanded far-reaching reforms in both domestic and foreign policy, and a declaration in favour of peace without annexations or indemnities.

The consequences were dramatic. The Chancellor attempted a reply, but failed to convince the House. The four Central parties formed a new *bloc*, pledged to demand reform of the Prussian constitution, parliamentary government throughout the Empire, and a declaration of war aims on the lines laid down by Erzberger. The Emperor hastened to Berlin, and von Hindenburg and von Ludendorff were summoned from General Headquarters. The Crown Prince came also, for it was the Brandenburg fashion to summon the heir to any conference which concerned the future of the family estates. The first plan was to throw a sop to the malcontents by certain concessions as to

July 11. Prussian reform. On Wednesday, 11th July, the Emperor issued a decree expanding his Easter message, and making the suffrage for the Prussian Diet not only direct and secret,

but also equal. The sop did not satisfy. The *bloc* remained in opposition, and continued to demand the introduction of parliamentary government generally, and a resolution on war aims. For a week the Reichstag was thoroughly out of hand, and its disorder brought about Bethmann-Hollweg's fall. During that week his resignation was offered and accepted.

It could not have been otherwise. He had failed to control the Reichstag, and his Imperial Master must either get rid of him, or turn over the management of affairs to the parliamentary majority and become a constitutional sovereign. The Chancellor's sympathies were probably with the malcontents, but he knew that he could never secure an assent to their demands from the Emperor. He was left without friends. Himself a *politique*, he had tried to keep the balance between the party of reform and the party of reaction. His purpose was intelligent and honourable; but, as so often happens to trimmers, he had alienated both sides. The Conservatives and the Pan-Germans regarded him as a weakling, and the reformers looked upon him as a mere tool and hack. He belonged to no party, and therefore none took the trouble to defend him. He had not succeeded in his policy, for instead of being a *trait d'union* between opposites, he had become the butt of both. He had committed the unpardonable sin in the eyes of his master, for he had failed to keep the peace among the talkers in the Reichstag, whom the bureaucracy were obliged to tolerate but could not love.

The *politique* gets little justice when he fails. The anxious, harassed, well-meaning, intermittently honest, and essentially maladroit statesman who had

fallen from power will probably fare better at the hands of future historians than he did with the journalists of his own age and country. It will be credited to him that he saw further into the problem than most of his fellow-citizens; that he sought honestly what he believed to be the welfare of his country; and that he had a perception of facts denied to his showier rivals. The mere fact that an Imperial Chancellor should resign because of an uproar in the Reichstag was significant enough. His office was the keystone of the German constitution. Parliamentary organizations came and went, but the Chancellor remained. During the forty-six years of the German Empire's existence there had been only five Chancellors, and the shortest term of office—Caprivi's—had been four years. The Chancellor was not a creature of the Reichstag; he came to it from above, from the Emperor's cabinet, to announce a policy and demand its assent. He was the mouthpiece of the Emperor, and if his hearers flouted him they flouted the Imperial authority.

For a brief week Germany trembled on the brink of constitutional government. The recalcitrant *bloc* had a majority, but it could not use it, for it had no leaders. It squandered itself on barren intrigues and conferences, but it had one

July 19. spectacular triumph. On 19th July it carried by a majority of more than one hundred a motion on war aims. This celebrated resolution declared that the object of the war was solely to defend the liberty, independence, and territorial integrity of Germany; that the Reichstag stood for peace and understanding between parties,

and that annexations and political and economic oppression were contrary to such a peace. This was a definite challenge to the Pan-Germans ; more, it was a denial of the ideals for which the German Government had explicitly undertaken the war. It made havoc of the " German peace " based on a comprehensive " rectification " of frontiers and a wide economic hegemony, for which von Tirpitz, von Reventlow, and even the milder pedants of *Mittel-Europa* had argued. It was in substance a condemnation of Germany's policy for the past half century.

But in the absence of leadership it was a mere pious opinion. The Emperor took no notice of it, and parliamentary government in Germany died as suddenly as it had been born. The Reichstag was not consulted in the appointment of the new Chancellor. Three names were presented to the Emperor by the military chiefs, and he chose the one which seemed to him to be the safest. This was a certain Dr. Georg Michaelis, an official sixty years old, who had done useful work in the Food Control Department. He was almost unknown to the public, being one of those types bred by the German bureaucracy which rise to great executive power without ever coming into the limelight of public opinion. He was selected because he was docile and safe, and was believed to be a competent administrator. His political sympathies were known to be on the Conservative side. The friendly press could only praise him in terms which augured ill for his success ; he was greeted as " an absolute Prussian, in whose veins runs the categorical imperative." Helfferich, whose position had seemed precarious, was made Vice-Chancellor, and given

the Ministry of the Interior, as well as the Vice-Presidency of the Prussian Ministry. Zimmermann, who had conspicuously failed at the Foreign Office, was succeeded by Baron von Kuhlmann, an urbane and adroit diplomat, a master of persuasive speech, and in policy far removed from the intransigence of the military school. He was to act as the velvet glove for the mailed fist.

From the start the "absolute Prussian" was in trouble. He had to deal with the Reichstag resolution of 19th July, and the demand for parliamentary government. The latter subject he left untouched, and on the former he produced a masterpiece of equivocation. He professed to accept it, "as he understood it;" but he added so many conditions and qualifications in his understanding of it that it was obvious he meant to throw it over as soon as he felt himself strong enough. The whole tenor of his first speech was reactionary, save that he did not insist upon the indemnities which Helfferich had been accustomed to proclaim. The worthy man was indeed in a hopeless *impasse*. He could not speak pleasant things of a democracy in which he and his masters did not believe. He could orate on the merits of the submarine campaign, or the strength of the German front, or the breakdown of Brussilov's last offensive, but he was far too angular to play skilfully von Kuhlmann's part of the good Liberal and Progressive facing a world of reactionary enemies. His courtesies towards the German reform party and the Russian extremists suggested the case of a respectable matron who, in order to save the credit of a favourite son, is compelled to be civil to a cocotte.

He was soon outclassed by von Kuhlmann, who was a born intriguer. The new Foreign Secretary let it be known that he intended to produce an "atmosphere" favourable to negotiation—not for the sake of an honest peace, but in order to make strife among the Allies, and convince each that the other was in secret relations with the enemy. Apart from the folly of his preliminary announcement, he played his game with skill and unwearying industry. It will be long before the full tale can be told of von Kuhlmann's doings during the summer and autumn of 1917. He harped cunningly on every pacifist string in Allied countries. He toiled to make Kerenski's position impossible, and to break up the last remnant of Russian order. He came to an understanding with Austria, so that Berlin and Vienna might speak with the same voice; and he sheltered himself behind the latter in many of his intrigues, since a lingering friendliness towards Austria was still to be found among many to whom Germany was anathema. In every neutral country he had his agents busy staging the picture of the first of the world's military powers burning with zeal to take the lead of the world's democracies.

Presently the wind of peace blew from another quarter. In a Note dated 1st August, but not published till the middle of the month, *Aug. 1.* the Vatican invited the belligerent States to consider concrete proposals for peace. These were the diminution of armaments, the establishment of arbitration in international disputes, the "freedom of the seas," a general condonation as to the damage done by the war, a general restitution of occupied territory, and an examination in a

friendly spirit of other territorial questions, such as Armenia, Poland, and the Balkans. At first reading the Note seemed to be merely a catalogue of generalities, on which agreement was possible without bringing peace a day nearer. But on closer consideration it was evident that there were significant points about the wording. Take the reference to Belgium. Benedict XV. called for the complete evacuation of that country, "with a guarantee of her full political, military, and economic independence *towards all Powers whatsoever.*" This involved the acceptance of the German claim that Belgian independence was threatened as much by France and Britain as by Germany. So, too, with the plea for reciprocal condonation of military damage. The Power which had done the damage was Germany, and the Note asked that she be relieved of the consequences of her wrongdoing. The cool and detached tone towards atrocities perpetrated on Catholic countries and Catholic churches fell strangely on Allied ears. In effect the Vatican asked for a restoration of the *status quo ante bellum*, a settlement which three-fourths of Germany would have gladly welcomed, and which would have been wholly in German interests. Berlin, after taking some weeks to consider the question, responded with enthusiasm, welcoming negotiations on the lines which the Pope had suggested, and professing that it had drawn the sword for no other purpose than to defend right against might. President Wilson, on behalf of the Allies, issued a reply which went to the heart of the matter.*

* The Papal Note and President Wilson's Reply are printed in Appendix II.

“ It is manifest that no part of this programme can be successfully carried out unless the restitution of the *status quo ante* furnishes a firm and satisfactory basis for it. The object of this war is to deliver the free peoples of the world from the menace and the actual power of a vast military establishment controlled by an irresponsible Government which, having secretly planned to dominate the world, proceeded to carry the plan out without regard either to the sacred obligations of treaty or the long-established practice and long-cherished principles of international action and honour ; which chose its own time for the war ; delivered its blow fiercely and suddenly ; stopped at no barrier of law or of mercy ; swept a whole continent within the tide of blood—not the blood of soldiers only, but the blood of innocent women and children also, and of the helpless poor ; and now stands balked but not defeated, the enemy of four-fifths of the world. This Power is not the German people. It is the ruthless master of the German people. It is no business of ours how that great people came under its control or submitted to its temporary zest, to the domination of its purpose ; but it is our business to see to it that the rest of the world is no longer left to its handling.

“ To deal with such a Power by way of peace upon the plan proposed by his Holiness the Pope would, so far as we can see, involve a recuperation of its strength and a renewal of its policy ; would make it necessary to create a permanent hostile combination of the nations against the German people, who are its instruments ; would result in abandoning the new-born Russia to the intrigue,

the manifold subtle interference, and the certain counter-revolution, which would be attempted by all the malign influences to which the German Government has of late accustomed the world. Can peace be based upon a restitution of its power or upon any word of honour it could pledge in a treaty of settlement and accommodation? ”

During August and September Michaelis passed from blunder to blunder, while von Kuhlmann was busy with his “peace atmosphere.” The latter had many difficulties to encounter. The follies of Count Luxburg in the Argentine and the futile German conspiracies in Mexico and elsewhere, which the Government of Washington periodically revealed, were not calculated to exalt the reputation of German honour. Moreover, the *politique* was always in opposition to the military chiefs, who not only were intransigent in their war aims, but had an awkward habit of blurting out truths which wrecked the laborious *camouflage* of the Foreign Minister. It was hard to play cunningly on the psychology of enemy peoples when at any moment a heavy-footed soldier might scatter the web. It was hard to labour for a German victory through peace, when simpler souls could only think of peace through a German victory. Nor must it be forgotten that the soldier ranked far higher in popular esteem than the politician. The territorial commands in Germany were indeed excessively unpopular, but not so General Headquarters. The latter might be anti-democratic and unbending, but it had clean hands, and maintained the old tradition of the incorruptible German public servant. Muddling and corruption in civil administration, and scandalous war-profiteering,

had caused the ordinary politician to stink in the nostrils of the country. Few honest Germans, whether Socialist or not, could prefer the personalities of von Kuhlmann, Erzberger, and Scheidemann to von Ludendorff and von Hindenburg.

Throughout August and September there were so many forces at work within Germany that a clear distinction was impossible. Von Kuhlmann continued to make an "atmosphere" by hinting at the evacuation and restoration of Belgium on easy terms. The desperate economic condition of Austria moved opinion towards peace, and the growing demoralization of Russia swung it back towards war. Indeed, we may say that the spectacle of the collapse of all government in Russia was the most potent weapon to weaken the reform movement in Germany, and to content the people with their traditional system. Propaganda was officially conducted everywhere, even among the troops at the fronts, in favour of a "German" peace by victory as against a "Scheidemann" peace by negotiations, and a new book, von Freytag-Loringhoven's *Deductions from the World War*, preached the strictest doctrines of German militarism as the only hope of the future. The export of this work abroad was prohibited, as inimical to von Kuhlmann's peace "atmosphere;" but its circulation was officially promoted within Germany itself, and it had undoubtedly a high propaganda value. Even those who did not subscribe to the doctrines of the Deputy Chief of the General Staff had some sympathy with the maxim which von der Goltz used to quote with approval—"the Roman principle never to conclude peace in times of disaster." Though they had abandoned the extreme hopes of the first

months of war, they were clear that Germany had been the victor in the struggle, and that she must emerge not only without loss but with some positive gain. This was the general temper of the German people, and it hardened as Russia went deeper into the mire, and the attack of the Allies in the West failed to accomplish its purpose. The Resolution of 19th July was becoming forgotten, and the peace visions of midsummer were fading out of the air. It needed only some striking success in the field to range the great bulk of public opinion on the side of the military chiefs.

When the Reichstag met in October it was in an electrical atmosphere. There had been grave disorders, amounting to mutiny, in the Fleet. The militarist propaganda, encouraged by the Government, seemed a defiance of the Reichstag majority, and a turning to ridicule of the resolution of 19th July. Moreover, the pacific speeches of von Kuhlmann and the Austrian Count Czernin had not only unsettled the weaker minds among the Allied peoples, but had left the ordinary German moderate in a very complete confusion of his own. On Saturday, 6th

Oct. 6. October, the Majority Socialists introduced an interpellation on the subject of the Pan-German propaganda encouraged by the authorities. General von Stein, the Minister of War, replied by pooh-poohing the whole affair. He was badly received, and was followed by Helfferich, who was shouted down. Upon this the Reichstag, thoroughly dissatisfied, took the bold step of re-

Oct. 8. ferring back to the Committee the new war vote of 300 millions. On Monday Michaelis himself addressed the Main Committee,

and Helfferich made a kind of apology. Next day, 9th October, the situation grew worse, when the Independent Socialist, Dittmann, referred to the naval mutiny, and accused the Government of treating the sailors unjustly. Michaelis replied by declaring that officials might belong to any party they liked, but that he personally considered the Independent Socialists outside the pale of patriotic parties. He was succeeded by Admiral von Capelle, who read a speech apparently composed with the help of the Chancellor, in which he declared that he had documentary evidence in his possession which showed that the chief instigator of the mutiny had worked in collaboration with Independent Socialists like Dittmann and Haase. An angry debate ensued, in which the Government were attacked for their use of the court-martial evidence without allowing the incriminated members of the House to hear it beforehand, or to examine the witnesses. The Chancellor at first associated himself with the charge made by von Capelle; but a few days later he made matters worse by asking for von Capelle's resignation, as if he were trying to escape by throwing the blame on a subordinate. The Reichstag passed the votes, and adjourned till December, but it was clear that Michaelis could not meet the House again.

On the 21st the Emperor returned to Berlin after paying visits to his friends Ferdinand of Bulgaria and the Sultan of Turkey. He had to find a new Chancellor; and the choice was not easy, for he must have a man who could manage the Reichstag and at the same time be acceptable to General Headquarters. His choice

Oct. 9.

Oct. 21.

ultimately fell on Count Hertling, a Bavarian of seventy-four, who had spent most of his life as a professor in the University of Bonn, and had been leader of the Centre in the Reichstag till he quarrelled with von Bethmann-Hollweg over the Jesuits. He was a devout Catholic, a profound student of St. Augustine, and a skilful parliamentarian, whose private creed was anti-parliamentary. It seemed incredible that such a man should be acceptable to the Socialists and Liberals, or to Prussia at large. Moreover, the office of Chancellor carried with it the appointment of Prussian Minister President. To avoid future trouble it was desirable to make certain of a working majority in the Reichstag. The Chancellor-designate went round cap in hand to the different parties soliciting their support. For a week or two he met with no success, and it seemed as if he must return to Munich ; but the adroit von Kuhlmann took up the task, and devised a formula on which all the party leaders, except the Socialists, could agree. So it came about that on 31st October an elderly

Oct. 31. Bavarian ultramontane became Chancellor of the Empire and Minister President of Prussia. The curious noted that this befell on the four hundredth anniversary of the day on which Martin Luther had nailed his theses to the church door of Wittenberg.

The appointment, though it seemed at first sight paradoxical, was shrewdly calculated. Count Hertling had affinities with all the governing parties, and was identified with none. Conservatives were inclined to accept one who had always been a Conservative ; Liberals looked with a certain

friendliness on a man who had risen into repute as a parliamentarian, and had accepted the resolution of July. The truth was that his coming meant the rout of the reformers. Much was made in foreign countries of the fact that he had not been appointed till the assent of the Reichstag majority was assured, and this was hailed as a triumph of constitutionalism. But to argue thus was to misread the situation. The consultation of the politicians was only a device to prevent the trouble to which Michaelis had been subjected. It was a private arrangement, and the unshaken power of the autocracy was proved by the fact that such a figure could be forced on the country at all. The thing was possible only because the discontents of the summer had been decisively quelled. The stirrings of reform, the aspirations towards peace, still existed, but they were diffuse, impotent, and voiceless. The dreamer who yet believed that the German people had learned their lesson and were burning to throw off their yoke was living in a fool's paradise. Russia's descent to chaos had suddenly become accelerated; and during October the Austro-German armies had won a great victory in Italy, and were sweeping towards the Po. At the news every section, except the Minority Socialists, became converted to a "German" peace. The press and the politicians, who had been coquetting with negotiations and making eyes at democracy, shrieked as loudly for conquest as they had done in 1914. Ephraim was once more joined to his idols, and revealed himself as wholly impenitent and unchanged. The smooth speeches of von Kuhlmann could scarcely be heard for the din of his exultant countrymen behind him.

CHAPTER CXLIII.

THE SUMMER AT VERDUN AND ON THE AISNE.

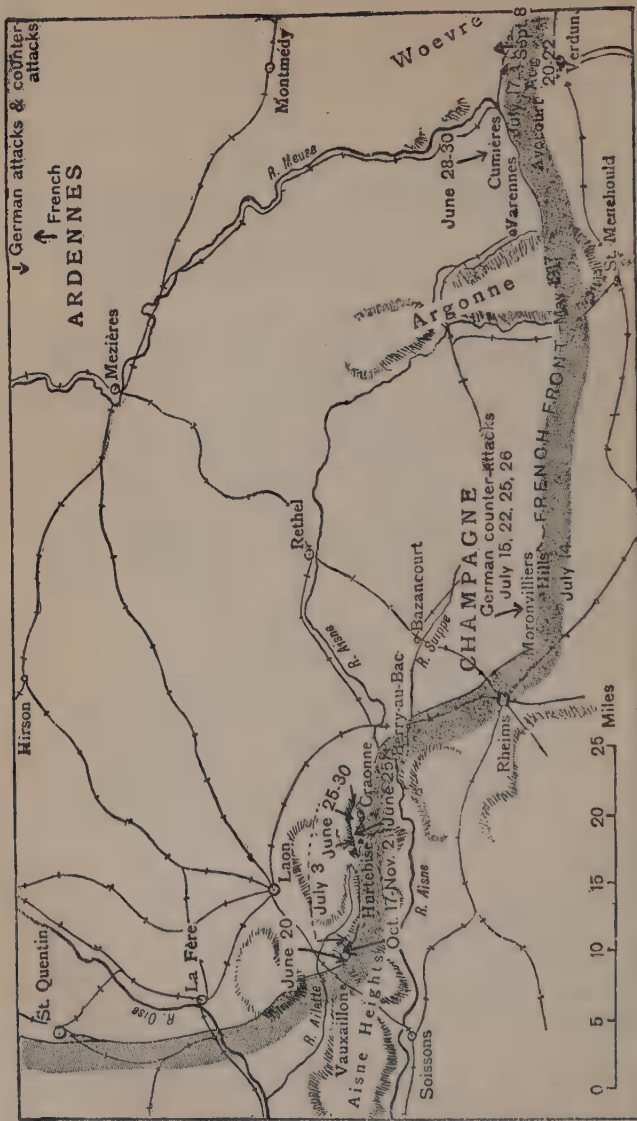
Pétain's Summer and Autumn Policy—The French Defensive on the Aisne—Battles of 3rd, 8th, 19th, and 22nd July—End of German Offensive—Gouraud's Advance at Moronvilliers—The Verdun Area—German Attack on Hill 344 and Mort Homme—Guillaumat restores the French Line—The French Offensive of August—The Attack of 21st August—Capture of Mort Homme and Talou Ridge—Capture of Samogneux—Capture of Hill 344—The French reach the Forges Brook—Capture of Beaumont Village—Results of Battle—The French Offensive on the Aisne—Battle of Malmaison—French reach the Banks of the Ailette—The Germans retire from the Hills.

WE left the French armies when in the first days of June they had won the main position of the Chemin des Dames, and had driven the enemy from his observation posts on the Aisne heights, while they themselves were looking down into the vale of the Ailette : and east of Rheims held the whole summit-ridge of the Moronvilliers *massif*. The story of the summer which followed is one of fierce and persistent German attacks to win back the lost ground. The enemy's motives were partly defensive, for even the modified success of the French on the Aisne endangered the left flank of the Siegfried Line ; partly the desire to restore the waning credit of the Imperial Crown Prince by something which could be called a victory ; and partly to keep up the *moral* of his troops

by an offensive in a safe area, since elsewhere on the long front they were being slowly and remorselessly driven backward by Haig. The Second Battle of the Aisne finished, so far as the main operations were concerned, with the capture of the California Plateau on 5th May; but it was destined to drag out with much sharp and costly fighting for another hundred days.

The first task of Pétain was to hold what he had won, but a second project was occupying his thoughts. Beyond doubt the armies of France had been shaken and depressed by the comparative failure of the most elaborate battle they had as yet embarked upon. It was his duty to nurse them back to assurance and cheerfulness. Hence very slowly and carefully he planned an assault, when his men should have recovered confidence after their successful defence and be eager for the *revanche*. He chose Verdun, where France fought always with a special pride, and he chose the one section of the Aisne heights to which the enemy still clung. The battle of France during the summer and autumn of 1917 fell, therefore, into two stages—a long period of “stone-walling” against the German counter-strokes, and two short, perfectly staged, and victorious offensives.

From 3rd June to 20th June there was a lull on the Aisne. Four points in the French position were marked out for enemy attacks *June 3–20*.—the extreme left north of Vauxaillon, where the line approached the Ailette; the Malmaison sector, where the enemy held a strong position on the northern rim of the tableland; the narrows of the hog’s back at Hurtebise; and the plateaux of Vauclerc

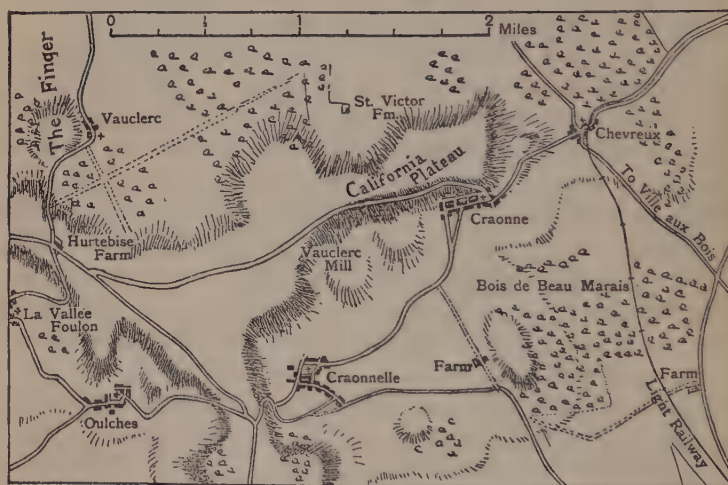


Map showing the French front from St. Quentin to Verdun (May 1917) and the German railway communications, and indicating the points where serious fighting took place in the summer and autumn of 1917.

and California forming the butt of the range above Craonne. On 20th June the first point, between the Ailette and Laffaux Mill, *June 20.* was hotly attacked by "shock" troops and the first positions taken, but by the next evening the French had recovered the ground. On 25th June it was the turn of the French to strike. The spur north of Hurtebise, called the *June 25.* Hurtebise Finger, was in German hands, and it commanded from the west the Vauclerc plateau. The spur was honeycombed by the great limestone grotto known as the Dragon's Cave. The southern entrance had been closed by a shell explosion, but the north entrance and the cavern itself were in German hands. To win the Finger not only the crest above ground but the grotto beneath must be captured, for otherwise the enemy might have blown up the whole spur. After a hard struggle, during the day of 25th June, the spur was carried, the northern outlet of the cave seized, and some thousand prisoners taken.

In the last days of June the Germans attacked in the Hurtebise area, and from Corbény against the eastern bluff of the heights. On 3rd July came the first of the Crown Prince's more serious efforts. Von Boehn's *July 3.* Seventh Army launched an attack on a twelve-mile front, from Malmaison to the woods of Chevreux, north of Craonne. After an artillery bombardment of only half an hour the "shock" troops advanced at eight in the morning, followed by some six infantry divisions. Their aim was the whole length of the hog's back held by the French from east of Malmaison to California. But the French were

not to be taken unawares. Their barrage caught the first wave of the attack in the open, and after a long day's fighting the enemy was driven off the plateau. On this occasion the Germans were advancing from the low ground in the Ailette valley, so von Boehn's next attempt was from Malmaison, where he held a strong position on the plateau itself. Here the French front ran into a salient,



The Hurtebise—Craonne Position.

and the enemy's aim was to cut it off and drive the French off all that section of the heights. At

July 8. 3.45 a.m. on the morning of 8th July the German infantry advanced as soon as their guns opened fire. Wave after wave followed during the day, and far into the night; but they gained nothing, except on the Chevreigny spur, where for twenty-four hours they secured a mile or

so of the French front trenches. These were won back on the morning of the 9th, and for his heavy losses von Boehn had nothing to show.

On 19th July the 5th Division of the Prussian Guards made another attempt to storm the plateaux of Vauclerc, the Casemates, and California, between Hurtebise and Craonne. It was the most serious of the enemy's strokes, for, if these positions were lost, the French, their left threatened by the enemy at Malmaison, would be driven off the crest of the ridge back to the Aisne valley. On the six-mile front more than 300 German guns were concentrated. The enemy had to force the northern slopes of the hills, where the French barrage dealt death among them; while the French troops on the little plateaux, each about a third of a mile broad, were the targets for the German bombardment. The battle began at mid-day on the 19th, and the five regiments of the Prussian Guards managed to reach the edge of the tableland. They were flung back, but continued to hold half a mile of the French position between the Casemates and California. The attack in the same area was renewed later in the evening, and next day a subsidiary attack was launched to the west between Malmaison and Hurtebise. On the 22nd the Prussian Guards, now reinforced by the 5th Reserve Division and the 15th Bavarians, advanced anew against the plateaux, and won a precarious foothold at California. On the 23rd there was no infantry fighting, but a desperate bombardment from both sides; and on the 24th the men of Touraine swept the enemy off the California ground.

That same day a strong assault in the Hurtebise sector was also repelled, an assault which was repeated fruitlessly every day till the 29th. The close of July saw the end of the German effort.

The attempt to restore the credit of the heir to the German throne had been singularly unsuccessful. From 5th May onward to the discontinuance of the action the Germans on this limited front had flung in no less than forty-nine divisions.* They had gained no ground, and they had lost heavily, especially among their picked *Stosstruppen*. German tactics were in a state of transition, both for offence and defence, and the Aisne discredited the use of "shock" battalions, as the later stages of Third Ypres discredited the "pill-box" and von Armin's method of a retired front. But the main result of the battle was the new confidence which it inspired in the armies of France. They had endured against odds and yielded nothing, and their temper was set for a resolute offensive.

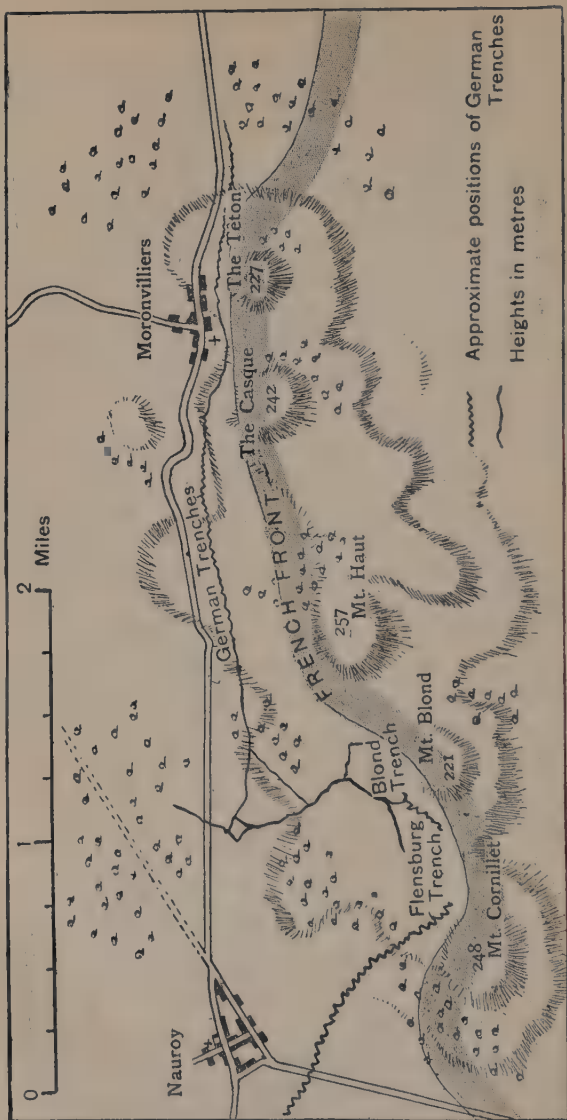
During these months the Fourth Army at Moronvilliers was engaged in various small but successful operations. On 9th June
June 9. Anthoine, departing to the First Army in Flanders, yielded his command to General Gouraud, who in the Argonne and in Gallipoli had won great fame as a leader of men. The new general was not satisfied with his front, especially between Mont Cornillet and Mont Blond; for though he held the two summits, the enemy had the Flensburg

* During, approximately, the same period in 1916 the enemy used only twenty-five divisions on the rather narrower Verdun front. The changed circumstances in the East enabled him to be more lavish in his use of troops.

trench on the saddle between, and awkward positions on the northern slopes of Mont Blond which might form a starting-point for a new offensive. It was Gouraud's wish to cut off this salient, and he entrusted the work to the French 132nd Division. The task was to be undertaken after careful reconnaissance by selected parties of bombers. These started just before dawn on 21st June. *June 21.* The Germans were expecting an attack, and had strengthened their posts in the Flensburg trench and put down a heavy barrage. The operation was completely successful—the Flensburg and Blond trenches were won, and the enemy had lost all chance of observation over the southern slopes of the Moronvilliers range, except for two positions, one on the saddle between Mont Blond and Mont Haut, and one on the western side of the latter hill.

General Fritz von Below now brought up three fresh divisions—the 19th Hanoverians, the 7th, and the 23rd Reserve—with the intention of regaining the crest line. But Gouraud anticipated his plans. On 12th and 13th July the French guns deluged with shells the position of the new divisions. On 14th July—the *jour de France*, which had been celebrated the year before on *July 14.* the Somme by the capture of the German second line—Gouraud attacked at 7.30 in the evening, on two fronts of 800 and 600 yards, with the purpose of clearing the saddle between Mont Blond and Mont Haut and extending the French hold on the Téton. Within half an hour he had secured all his objectives and taken some hundreds of prisoners.

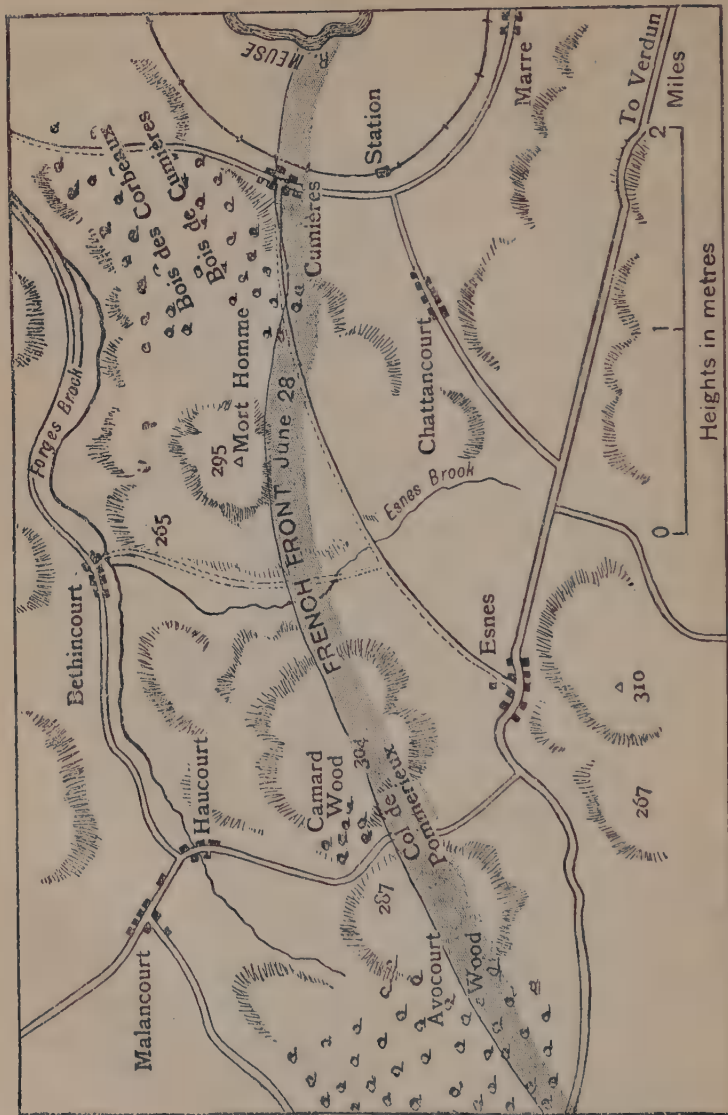
Violent counter-attacks followed. During the



The Fighting on the Moronvilliers Hills, July 1917.

night the saddle changed hands for an hour or two, but on the Téton the enemy made no progress. On the night of the 22nd he attacked the French lines north-west of Mont Cornillet, on the 25th the whole front on Mont Haut, and on the 26th he made no less than five separate assaults. By the end of the month he had given up the task, and the Moronvilliers area had become a French fortress defending the plain of Châlons and threatening the flank of the German position in Champagne. Pétain was now free to turn his mind to his offensives elsewhere. July 22-26.

The Verdun area was held by the French Second Army, under General Guillaumat, who had commanded with distinction the 1st Corps at the Battle of the Somme. The enemy force was the Fifth Army, under von Gallwitz, a general whose battleground had hitherto been south-eastern Europe. When the Second Battle of Verdun died away in July 1916, the French line from left to right covered the village of Avocourt and Avocourt Redoubt, the southern slope of Mort Homme and Hill 304, Charny, Bras, the Froideterre ridge, a part of Fleury, Forts Souville and Tavannes, and so to the Woëvre. Nivelle's winter battles retook Douaumont and Vaux, Vacherauville, Poivre Hill, Louvemont, Bezonvaux, and Hardaumont, restoring the French front to its position on February 24, 1916, the fourth day of the First Battle of Verdun. It was not the old position which Sarrail had prepared in the great retreat, and it had obvious weak points. Any German activity in this sector must, therefore, be jealously watched.



Scene of the Battle on the Left Bank of the Meuse, June 28 to July 6, 1917.

In June von Gallwitz began to show signs of activity. Reconnoitring attacks were made on the left bank of the Meuse, and, to cloak this movement, feints were made in the south at Les Eparges and the St. Mihiel salient. Meantime 500 guns were massed behind the Avocourt-Cumières sector, where the French line ran through the south-eastern corner of Avocourt Wood across the Esnes-Malancourt road and along the south skirts of Hill 304 and Mort Homme to the river north of Chattancourt. The Esnes highway crossed the ridge by a little hollow, the Col de Pommerieux, which, if won by the enemy, would enable him to outflank the French lines on Hill 304. The German 10th Reserve Division was allotted for the attack, and trained behind the front on an exact model of the country. Of this Guillaumat was advised by a curious chance. A French airman, flying behind the lines, saw a set of trenches which he recognized as identical with those on Hill 304.

Von Gallwitz launched his attack on the afternoon of 28th June on a front of 2,000 yards. His "shock" troops carried the front trenches, and won to the Col de Pommerieux. A battalion in the Avocourt Wood beat off ten assaults and held their ground for twelve hours, till every survivor was wounded and the order came to withdraw. All next day the battle lasted, both east and west of Hill 304, and there were many marvellous cases of the tenacity of small units. A squadron of forty dismounted Breton Dragoons, between Hill 304 and Mort Homme, beat off several companies of "shock" troops, and held the Germans in this sector, more

than half being killed or wounded. West of Hill 304 the enemy had gained some ground, and on the 30th and the succeeding days he made a great effort to debouch from his new positions. The fighting was bitter and long on the slopes and in Avocourt

July 6. Wood, but by the 6th of July the German assault had lost its impetus and ebbed away.

On the night of 7th July Guillaumat began his counter-offensive. That night by a
July 7. brilliant little action he cleared away three enemy salients on Mort Homme and Hill 304.

The weather was bad, and not till the 17th was
July 17. Lebocq, the General commanding in the sector, ready for a larger operation.

The German forces had suffered severely under the French bombardment. The 10th Reserve Division had been strengthened by elements of the 48th, newly arrived from Russia, and the 29th was in process of relieving it when Lebocq struck. At 6.15 on the morning of that day, after an exceptionally heavy artillery preparation, the French 51st and 87th regiments, with three other battalions in support, attacked from Avocourt Wood to Mort Homme. They retook the Col de Pommerieux, and in half an hour had advanced half a mile and gained all their objectives with few casualties. The old line had been completely restored, and though during the rest of the month there were small counter-attacks at various points from Les Eparges to Avocourt, it was never in serious danger.

All this was preparatory to the major offensive of August, which Pétain had decided upon as one of his two autumn battles. His aim was to restore

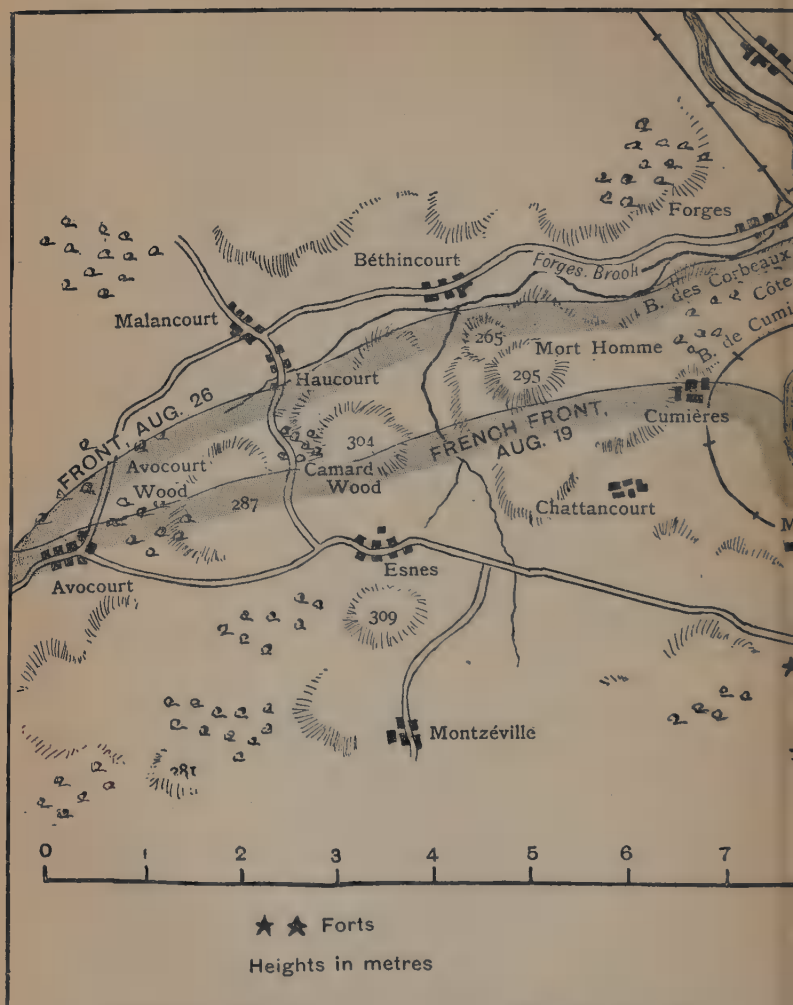
the old French front which had existed before the Crown Prince, on the morning of February 21, 1916, began the First Battle of Verdun. The enemy was aware that a great attack was in contemplation, and he guessed that its chief area would be the left bank of the Meuse. On 17th August the divisions defending Mort Homme and Hill 304 were warned that they must expect to be attacked at any moment, and that they must depend on their own resources. Their position was very strong, and they relied upon the great tunnels cut in the ridges for cover from the French bombardment, and upon the counter-bombardment of their new mustard-gas shells to check the advancing infantry. Von Gallwitz was prepared to fight as von Armin was fighting at Ypres—holding his front line lightly, and waiting the chance of a counter-stroke while his assailants were still uncertain in their new positions.

Guillaumat surprised his opponents by many things, but mainly by the length of his front of assault. Not on the left bank of the river only, but on the whole eleven miles from Avocourt Wood to the north of Bezonvaux, he made ready for an attack. On the right the advance was intended to be short, for at Bezonvaux his front made a sharp angle and he could not risk a counter-stroke from the Woëvre. From Friday, 17th August, the French guns never ceased, and the bald bleached tops of Mort Homme and Hill 304 became balder and more skeleton-like. On the evening of Sunday, the 19th, the whole landscape was a vast smoking altar. It was hot, dry weather, the dust lay inches deep on the roads, and the sky was shrouded in a

fog of fumes and *débris*. Just before dawn on the morning of Monday, the 20th, the *Aug. 20.* French infantry moved forward on the whole front. They found that the guns had done their work for them. Stores of the enemy's gas shells had been exploded by the French bombardment, and in one division three whole regiments had been put out of action. Almost at a bound the French cleared Avocourt Wood, seized the two summits of Mort Homme, where in the spring of 1916 so much blood had been spilled, carried the Wood of Cumières, and, pouring over the crest, occupied the Crows' Wood, which they had lost sixteen months before.

East of the river the same division which in December 1916, under Muteau, had stormed the Côte du Poivre, had now the task of clearing the Talou ridge and the loop of the Meuse towards Samogneux. Forcing their way through clouds of German gas they took Talou, and Champneuville beyond it. Farther to the right the French carried Hill 344 (lost on February 24, 1916), Mormont Farm, and Hill 240, north of Louvemont. The extreme right wing advanced some distance in the two woods of Fosses and Chaume. Von Gallwitz's counter-strokes missed their mark. He launched them at Avocourt Wood, at the Mort Homme, and at Hill 344; but the speed and fury of the French had demoralized the defence, and they came to nothing. Over 4,000 unwounded prisoners remained in Guillaumat's hands.

The position now was that the French had encircled Hill 304 and had won the main part of the ridge called the Goose's Crest, between the Forges



The French Advance



of Verdun, August 1917.



brook and the Meuse, while on the right bank they had cut off the river loop. On Tuesday, the 21st, the east end of the Côte de l'Oie was taken and the village of Regnéville beyond it, while the front east of the river was brought into line by the capture of Samogneux and the whole northern slope of Hill 344. Von Gallwitz was thoroughly shaken. The German *communiqués*, as was their habit in evil days, became frankly mendacious; and German airmen, acting under orders, bombed the Red Cross hospitals well behind the French lines, causing the death of many nurses and doctors and wounded men. This barbarity sharpened the temper of the French assault. The German counter-attacks all along the new front were beaten off with a contemptuous ease. By Thursday evening the French centre had pressed well to the north of Mormont Farm, and the toll of captures had risen to 7,640 and 24 guns. On Friday Hill 304 and the Bois Camard fell to a single rush, and the French left reached the southern bank of the Forges brook, between Haucourt and Bethincourt—an advance of some 2,000 yards. On Saturday, the 25th, fresh progress was made in this area; and on the Sunday, east of the river, the whole of Fosses and Beaumont Woods were taken, and the skirts of the village of Beaumont reached. A German counter-attack, debouching from Wavrille Wood, was destroyed by the French artillery. On Monday, the 27th, there was fierce fighting around Beaumont, and with it the main action for the moment died down. Guillaumat had won brilliantly practically

Aug. 21.

Aug. 23.

Aug. 24.

Aug. 25-
26.

Aug. 27.

all his objectives, and had a total of some 10,000 prisoners.

There was quiet for nearly a fortnight, and then
Sept. 8. on Saturday, 8th September, the French pushed forward north of the Fosses Wood, took the whole of the Chaume Wood, and secured the high ground which commanded the Wood of Caures. Next day the enemy counter-attacked furiously but without results,
Sept. 9. both there and north of Hill 344. Guillaumat had now secured what he desired. The enemy had been pushed far away from Verdun almost to the line from which he had moved on the first day of the First Battle, and all the armies of France had been quickened to a new eagerness and hope by their success on this classic fighting-ground.

The omens were thus happy for Pétain's second autumn battle. He chose that part of the Heights of the Aisne where the enemy still had a foothold, the western end of the Chemin des Dames between Allemant and Malmaison. The Second Battle of the Aisne in the spring had given the French the crown of the ridge, but only east of Hurtebise did they hold the northern rim. In all the western sector the Germans had a foothold on the plateau, and the French front ran practically in a straight line from Laffaux to Hurtebise. Both sides had narrow standing room, both had a river behind them, and both operated from the same kind of base—a series of spurs splayed like the fingers of a hand, running on the German side to the vale of the Ailette, and on the French side to the Aisne. The villages behind the German lines were on the reverse

slopes or on the flat. Pétain's aim was to clear the enemy wholly off the heights and to advance to the Ailette bank. He chose the triangle between the Aisne-Oise Canal and Soissons for his attempt, arguing rightly that if he could press back the enemy to the flats in this area he would compel a general retirement. The French forces were the Sixth Army, formerly under Mangin, and now under Maistre, who had once commanded the 21st Corps at Verdun. There were four corps in the army—the 11th under Maud'huy, the 14th under Marjoulet, the 39th under Deligny, and Maistre's old 21st, now under that Degoutte whom we saw in command of the Moroccan Division at Moronvilliers. Seven French divisions were allotted to the assault—the 13th under de Bouillon, the 27th under Roux, the 28th under Graziani, the 38th under Guyot des Salins, the 43rd under Michel, the 66th under Brissaud des Maillet, and the 67th under Savy.

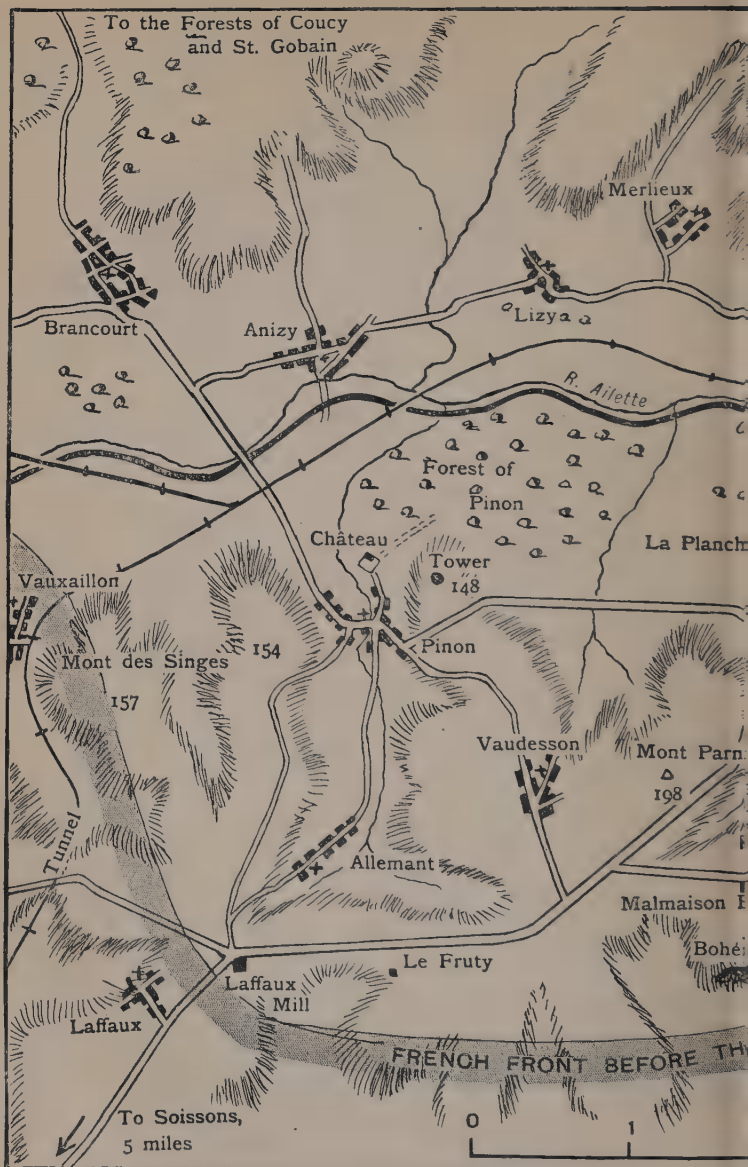
Opposed to Maistre was von Boehn's German Seventh Army, the group in action being under von Müller. In the battle area the 2nd and 5th Divisions of the Prussian Guards were disposed around Fort Malmaison; on the right the 13th, on the left the 47th Reserve, and in support the 14th and the 211th.

Like Nivelle at Verdun and Plumer at Messines, Maistre staged his battle superbly. His initial front was four miles long—from Laffaux Mill to La Royère farm. The preliminary bombardment began on Wednesday, 17th October, and *Oct. 17.* was directed mainly to breaking up the roofs and sealing up the entrances of the underground caverns which constituted one of the main

German defences. Mont Parnasse, behind Malmaison, one of the biggest quarries, had been shattered by 16-inch shells several days before the attack. On the night of Monday, 22nd October, the bombardment increased in fury, and in the drizzle before dawn on the 23rd it rose to a terrific crescendo. At 5.15, in fog and rain, the French infantry crossed their parapets.

Their success was immediate and unbroken. The first rush brought them to the line from Le Fruty, on the Laffaux-Chavignon road, to the quarries of Bohéry. The next bound gave the centre the Fort of Malmaison. It would appear that, as happened on two occasions during Third Ypres, the French attack anticipated a German move by a quarter of an hour, and therefore caught the enemy in some confusion. There was stiff fighting in the Mont Parnasse quarry, where the German reserve division came up; but presently the French centre was descending the northern slopes of the heights and had taken the village of Chavignon. The place was of extreme importance, for it gave a clear view to Laon along the little valley of the Ardon, and the slopes above it commanded all the eastern course of the Ailette. Meantime the French left had taken the villages of Allemant and Vaudesson, and the right were on the crest overlooking Pargny and Filain. It was a victorious day. On a four-mile front an advance of two and a quarter miles had been made; and some 8,000 prisoners and many guns had been taken. The enemy was left in a position in which he could not hope to abide.

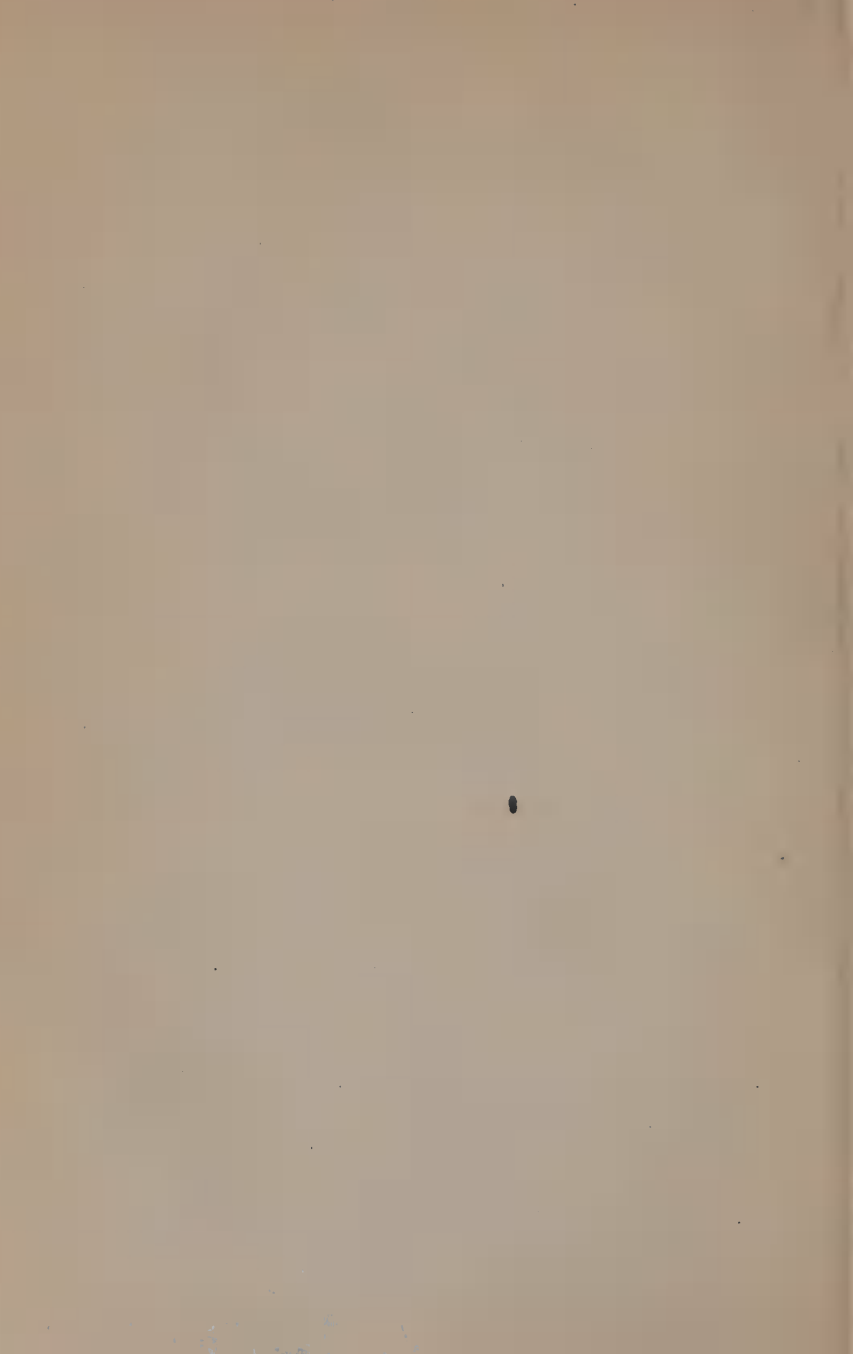
During the next three days Maistre swept on. He had not attacked the Mont des Singes, the spur



General Maistre's Victory on



Aisne Heights, October 1917.



which was the buttress of the German right, but he judged rightly that it must soon be evacuated. The French entered Pargny and Filain; they took Pinon in the flats, and pushed through the Pinon forest to the edge of the Aisne-Oise Canal. Presently the two armies faced each other across the marshy valley bottom. The enemy was in sore straits, for the new French positions commanded the flank of the Forest of Coucy and enfiladed his remaining front on the slopes of the Aisne hills east of Filain. On Friday, 2nd November, von Müller fell back altogether from the hills, and the French entered Courteçon, Cerny-en-Laonnois, Ailles, and Chevreux, the villages which had seen the fiercest of the midsummer fighting. After a six months' battle the Heights of the Aisne, on which the enemy had for three years been entrenched, were now again in the hands of France.

Oct. 24-27.

Nov. 2.

CHAPTER CXLIV.

THE RUSSIAN DOWNFALL.

Kornilov retreats to the Frontier—Loss of Czernovitz—Changes in the Russian Commands—Kornilov Commander-in-Chief—The Stand of Rumania—The Battle of Marasesti—Greatness of Rumania's Achievement—The Leninite Revolt of 16th July—Kerenski Prime Minister—His Difficulties—The Moscow Conference—Speeches of Kornilov and Kaledin—Inconclusive Results—Von Hutier takes Riga—Fall of Jacobstadt—Retreat of Russian Twelfth Army—Kerenski and Kornilov—Kornilov's Alleged "Rebellion"—The Council of Six—The Germans take Oesel, Moon, and Dago Islands—German Landing on Esthonian Coast—The Council of the Republic meets—Kerenski's Message to America—Trotski—The Military Revolutionary Committee—Trotski seizes Petrograd—Establishment of Bolshevik Government—Apathy of Russia—The Character of Kerenski.

ON 23rd July the Germans were in Tarnopol, the Russian Eleventh Army had gone to pieces, the Seventh and Eighth Armies were in retreat, and the whole Galician front had crumbled.

July 23. It was not a military defeat, for the enemy had no great weight of numbers. It was not a breakdown from sheer *physical* exhaustion, for Russia as a whole had not suffered to the degree of France or Germany. It was the collapse of the spirit of a nation, a tragedy which no glozing phrases could redeem. Let us grant that the old Russia had been misgoverned; that, like the Sullan *régime* at Rome, she had been less a constitution or an empire than a gigantic system

of police ; that her national integration and self-consciousness were weak ; and that the Revolution proclaimed many unexceptionable doctrines of autonomy and liberty and social reform. Unfortunately, the soul of a man or of a people is not saved by liberal professions. There is virtue in fighting for a narrow cause if the fighter translates it into his own homely loyalties, and is willing to undergo discipline and sacrifice and death for its sake ; there is none in huzzaing for a generous creed and in practice surrendering honour and self-control for self-interest and easy dreams. There had been a true brotherhood in the old armies of the Tsar ; there was little, save of the lips, in the mob that straggled back to the frontiers. Morally, the Russia of the Revolution, in spite of lofty declarations, was far below the community which it had destroyed. Steel and fire had given place to putty and packthread, and the new vision, which should have been a spur to effort, had become a facile plea for irresolution.

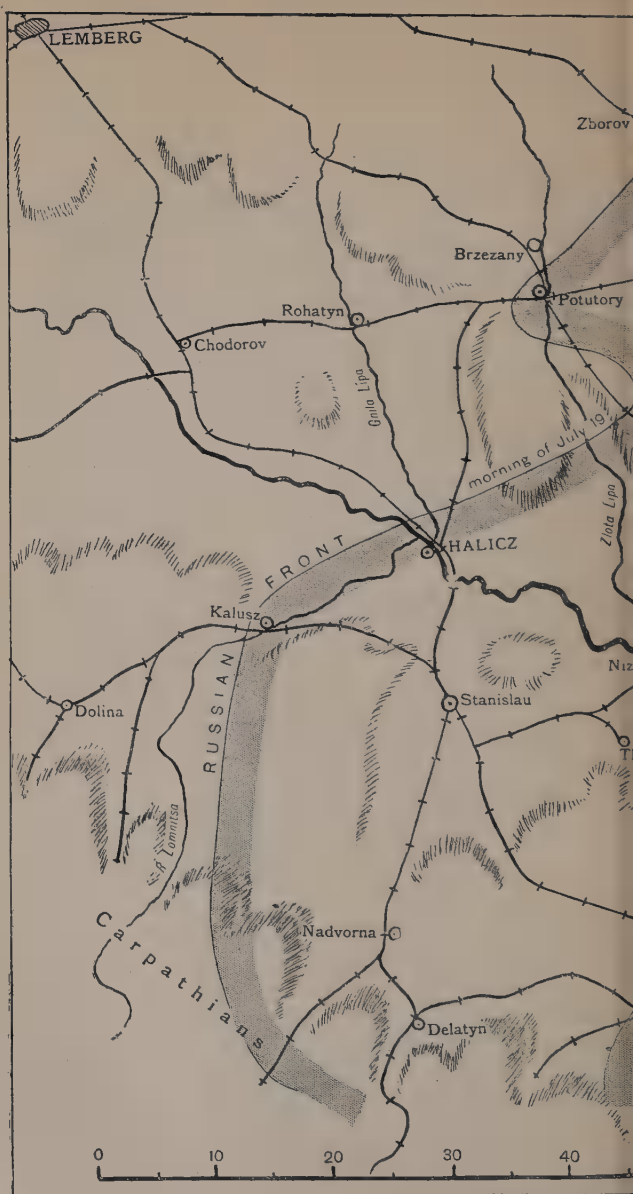
The tale of the fate of Brussilov's armies is soon told. Kornilov was placed in charge of the South-Western front in place of Gutor, and he flung all his volcanic energy into the vain task of reconstruction. He had to check the retreat of the Eleventh and Seventh Armies, and disengage his own Eighth Army (now under Tscheremisov) from the awkward position south of the Dniester in which it had been placed by the defection in the north. Halicz and Stanislau were at once evacuated, the Sereth was crossed *July 24*. by Bothmer south of Tarnopol, and on the 24th the enemy was close on Trembovla and Buczacz.

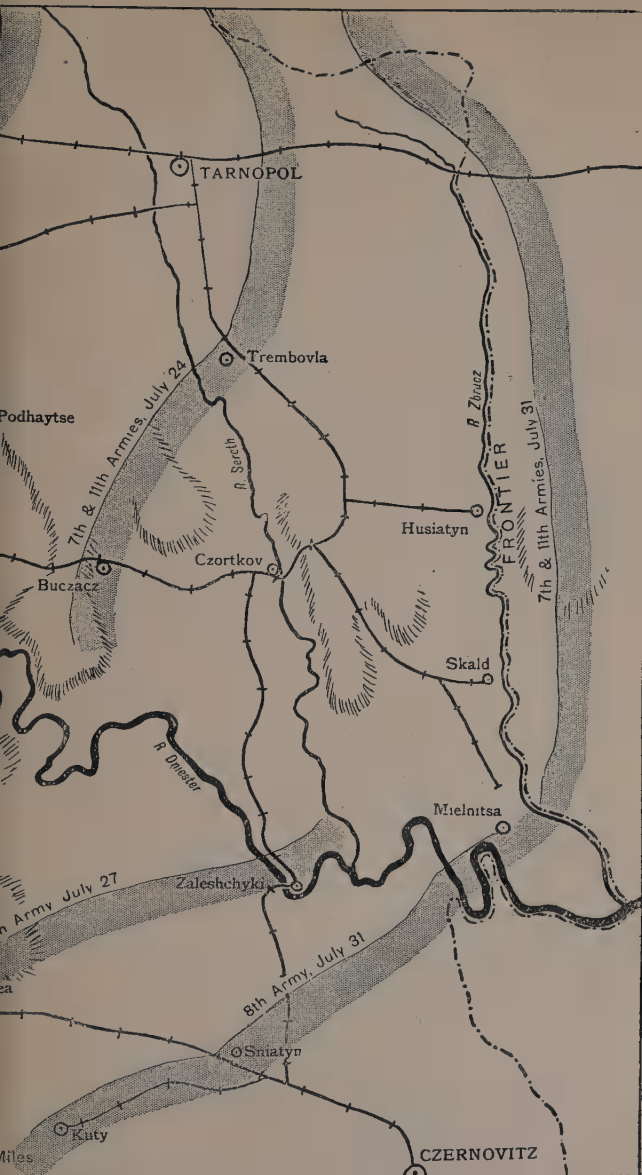
The German Emperor had arrived at the front to witness the easy triumph of order over revolution. The aim of the Austro-German Command was to push rapidly north of the Dniester so as to cut off the Russian forces in the Carpathians and the

July 27. Bukovina. On 27th July the Eighth Army was on the line Kolomea-Zaleshchyki ; on the last day of the month it was twenty miles farther back on the line Kutyn-Sniatyn-Miel-

July 31. nica. By that date the Seventh and Eleventh Armies had been pushed by Boehm-Ermolli beyond the river Zbrucz, which was the frontier of Russia. In places there were gallant stands against odds by various brigades, and the left of the Seventh Army fought stubbornly on the lower Sereth. The performance, too, of the British armoured cars in fighting unsupported delaying actions cannot be overpraised. But no isolated heroism could atone for the complete breakdown of the fighting machine. Erdelli, commanding the Eleventh Army, was murdered by a shot in the back from his own men, and Czernovitz and Kimpolung had fallen by the beginning of August. Kornilov was now standing desperately on his own frontier, barring the road to Odessa.

There was no reason why Prince Leopold should not have reached Odessa had the German High Command so desired. They had been fighting so far with comparatively few divisions, and, had they chosen to make a serious advance in the orthodox German manner, the way to Southern Russia and the Black Sea shore was open before them. Kornilov was making a stout defence of the border river, but no man knew better than he that he had





Galicia, July 1917.

no army on which he could rely. Brussilov had been dismissed on 2nd August, and Kornilov had taken his place as Com-
 Aug. 2.
 mander-in-Chief, the fifth to hold that office since the outbreak of war. Valuev, a cavalry leader, succeeded him for a few days on the South-Western front, till on 11th August he was trans-
 Aug. 11.
 ferred to the Northern group and his place taken by Denikin. Nothing could be better proof of the confusion of the Russian commands than this constant transposition of generals. But the Central Powers halted, and did not pluck the fruit which lay ready to their hand. They had secured all that for the moment they desired. The armies of the Revolution had been given the *coup de grâce*. It remained to let the mischief work a little longer, till the precarious civil government of Kerenski should likewise topple over.

Meantime on the Rumanian Sereth and in the Moldavian passes von Mackensen had no such easy task as fell to Boehm-Ermolli and Bothmer. In the middle of July the Rumanian front ran from the Oitoz Pass along the Putna valley to its junction with the Sereth east of Focsani. The Russian General Scherbachev, who had led the Seventh Army in the Galician offensive of the previous year, was in command of the front, which was held on the north by the Russian Fourth Army, and in the centre by the Rumanian Second Army under Avarescu. A considerable artillery strength had been accumulated, especially in Avarescu's area. On 24th July, when Boehm-
 July 24.
 Ermolli was in Tarnopol, a bombardment began against the enemy position in the valley of the

Susitza, a tributary of the Sereth, which was held by the right wing of von Gerok's First Austrian Army. This area was of great strategical importance, for it covered the short length of railway between Marasesti and Tecuciu, which connected the line from Focsani along the foot of the mountains that served the Rumanian front in the hill glens and the main line from Galatz to Jassy. At

July 26. four in the morning of the 26th Avarescu attacked, and in three days' hard fighting drove von Gerok south to the Putna valley, taking some 3,000 prisoners. On 7th August von

Aug. 7. Mackensen came to the rescue. Demoralization was spreading in the Russian Fourth Army, and in the Bistritza valley, which descends from the Bekas, whole regiments were deserting their posts. The time had arrived to break the Rumanian centre north and east of Focsani, and wrest from them the vital loop line. He pushed his way back to the Susitza, taking over 3,000 prisoners, crossed that stream, and came within a mile or two of Marasesti. Farther north in the Trotus valley von Gerok drove in the unstable Russian front, with the result that it had to be withdrawn to Ocna. Soon the enemy, in spite of desperate counter-attacks, had advanced five miles and taken 7,000 prisoners. Not Marasesti only was in jeopardy, but the junction of Adjutul, which was the key of the Carpathian lines. The Rumanian Government at Jassy were preparing to retire into South Russia.

Aug. 14. On Tuesday, 14th August, Rumanian troops, who had replaced the Russians in the Trotus valley, counter-attacked from Ocna, and

advanced for six miles. Their impetus, however, was soon exhausted, and once again they drew back towards the Sereth. Von Mackensen, farther south, pushed as far as the bridge where the Marasesti loop line crossed the Sereth. It was clear that the decisive battle would be fought for the crossing of the river, and for that purpose the German commander had brought up more than a dozen fresh divisions, including nine German. The whole front of a hundred miles from the mountains to Galatz was ablaze. The brunt of the fighting fell on the Rumanian First and Second Armies, and their difficulties were increased by the frequent defection of Russian units. The crisis of the battle was around Marasesti, and from that town will be named the greatest fight in Rumania's history. Von Mackensen was aiming at clearing Moldavia, as his colleagues had cleared Galicia and the Bukovina, and bringing the whole of what had once been the Rumanian kingdom under the yoke. The fury and persistence of the attack were matched by the resolution of the defence, and that resolution triumphed. The last great effort was made on the night of the 19th ; it failed with the loss of many prisoners, and thereafter the struggle for the Sereth crossing languished, and the battle swung towards the Ocna section. There the Second Rumanian Army equalled the prowess of the First, and August closed with von Mackensen and von Gerok far from their objectives.

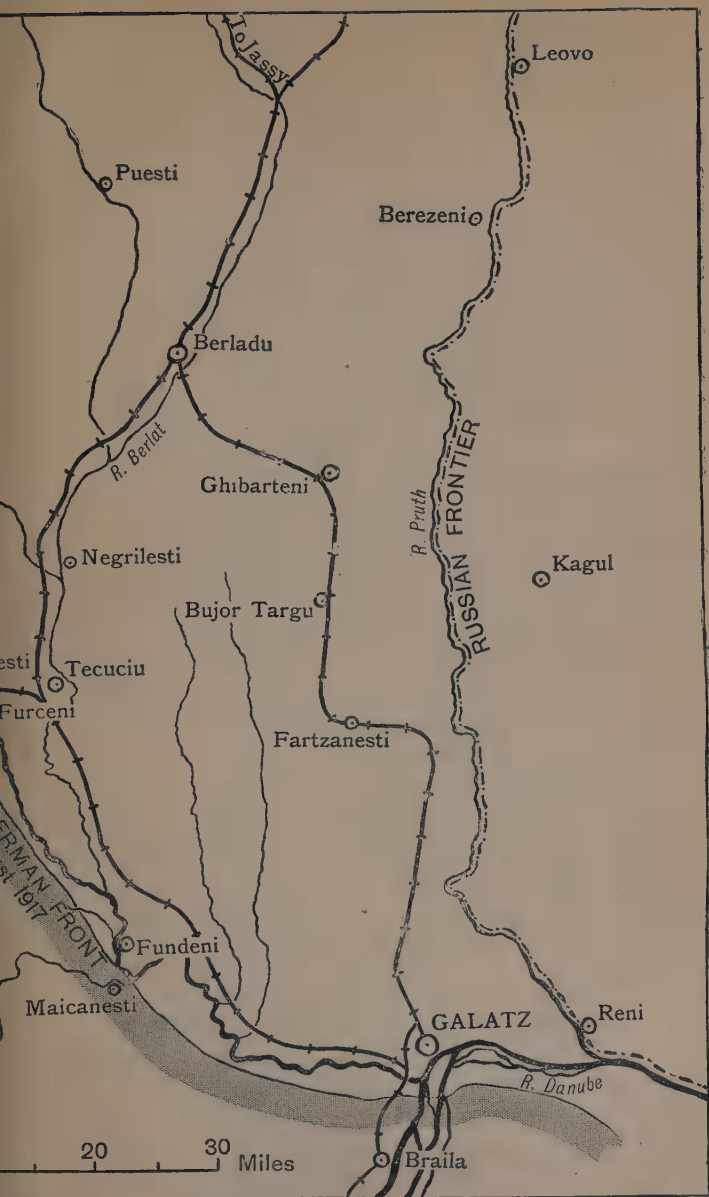
The melancholy confusion of the Eastern front during these months prevented what Rumania had done from receiving its due recognition. It was in truth a splendid achievement. The small nations

had a heroic record in the war, but not Belgium or Serbia had surpassed Rumania's performance. Broken in many battles against odds, she had been driven to her last defences, fighting desperately for every mile. She had seen all but a fraction of her territory seized by the enemy. She had suffered the last privations and anxieties, and she was far from the only Allies in whom she trusted. Yet in spite of every difficulty she had reconstructed her armies, assisted by General Berthelot and his French mission, and now held her ground against attacks from the flower of the Austrian and German forces. And she held it virtually alone. Scherbachev was a brave and competent soldier, but his Fourth Army was now for the most part a rabble. In those days might have been seen a dramatic spectacle—Russian regiments drifting away without orders from their lines, and singing maudlin songs about liberty, while on the other side of the road wearied Rumanian troops with stern faces and contemptuous eyes marched up to take the place of the deserters. Rumania saw the enemy on the north and west and south, and to the east only the quaking bog of anarchy; but without hope of supplies or way of retreat or that comfort which comes from contact with allies, she continued to do her duty. She proved most gloriously to the world that the ancient Roman virtues still dwelt in the heirs of the Dacian legionaries. The message sent to her by the British Prime Minister was an attempt to put into words the admiration of her far-off Allies:—

“ On the anniversary of Rumania's entry into the war, I wish to express on behalf of the British Government our



Operations in Southern



avia, July and August 1917.

heartfelt admiration for the heroic courage and endurance displayed by the Rumanian people during a year of almost unparalleled trial.

"In declaring against the Central Powers, Rumania took her stand for the cause of freedom against autocracy and of right against might. This cause can never fail, however long delayed its triumph may seem.

"The re-creation of their Army and the stubborn and invaluable resistance which it is now making against the enemy under conditions of exceptional difficulty is a magnificent example of the strength which freedom inspires in a free people. It is no less a proof of the resolution which animates all the Allied Armies to prosecute the war until victory is won, a victory which I have never doubted they will ultimately achieve."

On Monday, 16th July, when the Russian offensive in Galicia was on the eve of its disastrous climax, the Maximalists in Petrograd, *July 16.* led by Lenin and Trotski, attempted to seize the reins of government. They were supported by the Kronstadt sailors and various disaffected elements in the troops. But the Petrograd Soviet was against them, and, after some indiscriminate rioting, General Polovtsov, with the help of a few Cossack regiments, restored order, and Lenin went into hiding. It was decided to disarm the insurgent workmen, and warrants were issued for the arrest of the Bolshevik leaders; but at the last moment Kerenski drew back. "They are my political opponents," he said; and the orders were countermanded. He was soon to have cause to regret his misplaced chivalry.

Kerenski had now to face two very different antagonisms. He was attacked by the growing force of Bolshevism as a foe to the Revolution and an enemy of the people because he had devised the offensive; and he had to satisfy the generals and

the patriotic elements still left in Russia, who urged drastic reforms in the army, the restoration of the old discipline, and the retention of the country in line with the Allies. Between such opposites there could be no truce ; he must cast in his lot with one or the other. He had now become Prime Minister in place of Prince Lvov, and he found it hard to form his Cabinet. The Bolsheviks were in flat opposition ; the Menshevists were coming to the conclusion that the Provisional Government was a farce destined to a speedy end, and Tseretelli resigned, preferring the Soviets as a field of action. The Social Revolutionaries supported the Prime Minister, as did the Centre and the Right ; and he had among his ministers types as diverse as Tchernov and Skobelov on one side, and Terestchenko on the other. It was an uneasy team, and, besides Kerenski, included but one man of first-class importance, the acting Minister of War, Boris Savinkov, whose strange career had embraced the parts of novelist and desperado. As Prime Minister, Kerenski made one final attempt to call the nation to unity ; for he still believed that a formula could be found to combine irreconcilables, and that by wary shepherding the Bolsheviks and the Cadets might yet be brought into one fold. He was not prepared without a last effort of conciliation to declare any party enemies of the republic.

This effort was the conference at Moscow, which met on 25th August under the presidency of the Menshevist Nikitin, the Minister of
Aug. 25. Posts and Telegraphs. It included representatives of every known Russian organization, from the Soviets to the Knights of St. George.

It was a singular gathering, most instructive to the student of history, for it reflected as in a mirror the thousand crude dreams and fancies of a people loosed from the bonds of mental and moral discipline. The old *régime* had been bad enough in all conscience, but it had been a Government; the new *régime* was like the capricious play of children. Revenue by August had practically ceased; expenditure had soared amazingly, and to meet it the printing-presses could not cope with the manufacture of paper money. The issue of paper currency had been in 1916 over £29,000,000 monthly; in the months since the Revolution the average was over eighty-three millions. The army which had gone to pieces was costing more by a thousand millions sterling per annum than the army which a year before had shattered the Austrian front on the Dniester. Russian finance had become a system of bribes and public plunder, and the salaries of the Soviet partisans alone amounted to many millions. Industries were mostly at a standstill, the cultivation of the soil was neglected, and the utter breakdown of transport made famine a certainty in the coming winter. But these were not the matters which weighed most at the Moscow Conference. The bulk of its members were far more concerned with the kind of ideal polity at which the nation should aim, forgetful of the fact that they were swiftly losing all that distinguished a nation from a horde. The idealism which set out to make a new heaven and a new earth had succeeded effectually in creating a new hell.

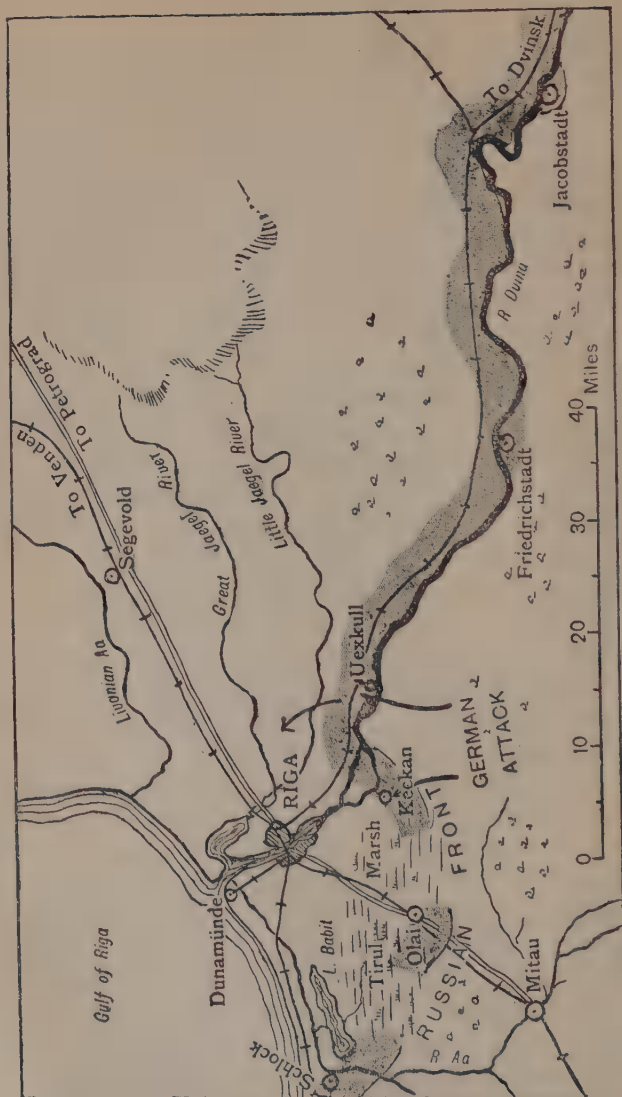
Kerenski, faithful to his *rôle*, spoke plain words to all parties. He denounced those who would

make a counter-revolution by bayonets, and he denounced those of the Left who would make a counter-revolution unwittingly by encouraging anarchy. He admitted that the main task before them was to revive the army, and he assured the soldiers present that he would protect them from Bolshevik intrigues, and would apply the death penalty ruthlessly for treachery and cowardice.

After his address came the group meetings. The Duma Conference supported the Premier's views on army reform and the prosecution of the war, and urged that the Government should free itself from the internationalism of the Soviets, and admit no rival authority in the direction of Russian policy. Here came the great conflict of opinion; for the various parties of the Left would admit no tampering with the Soviets' power, and would have given them an equal or even superior authority to that of the Government. Then Kornilov arrived from the front, and addressed the second sitting. He expounded the reason of the late *débâcle*. Not the Revolution but the follies of the Revolutionaries had taken the heart out of the army, and if that were not restored Russia and Russian freedom would perish at the hands of an alien tyranny. There must be discipline in the front line and not less discipline in the rear, for already the munition output had declined by 60 per cent. and the aircraft by 80. When he finished his soldierly speech he walked out of the hall, the whole assembly rising to cheer him except the glum Extremists, for whom the picture which Kornilov drew of a degraded and defeated Russia had no terrors, provided they were free to harangue and dream.

A little later Kaledin spoke for the Cossacks; and on the last day Alexeiev, the greatest of Russian soldiers, pointed the moral of the recent defeats. The poison had been introduced into the army by the famous Order No. 1 of the first days of the Revolution, which set the men against the officers and made orderly training impossible. The whole system of army committees and commissaries was insane. Under it a general could not plan, officers could not lead, and troops would not obey. He urged the policy of Kornilov and Kaledin, and warned his hearers that every day's delay brought them nearer to utter destruction.

There were many other speeches—notably wise advice given by Plekhanov and Prince Kropotkin and Madame Breshko-Breshkovskaya, reformers who had grown grey in striving for their country's freedom—and by the morning of the 28th *Aug. 28.* the Conference had talked itself to a standstill. Strangely enough, there was an apparent agreement among the great majority of the delegates over vital points—the reform of the army and the restoration of its discipline, the continuance of the war, and the reconciliation of party quarrels. But with most the first two were pious opinions, and the third was irony. The breaches had not been healed. The Left clung to the ultimate hegemony of the Soviets over the Government, which the Moderates bitterly and justly opposed. Three-fourths of Russia had no inclination for the sacrifice and discipline that a continuance of war demanded. The gulf between the soldiers and the dreamers had been made visible to all, and across it straddled Kerenski, a hapless Colossus, who must



The Forcing of the Dvina Line and the Fall of Riga.

soon make his election and leap to one side, or fall into the chasm.

Meantime, Germany was acting. We can best follow the history of the next two months by setting in juxtaposition according to dates the political and military happenings.

In the last week of August the Eighth German Army under a new general, von Hutier, whose name was soon to become famous, began to move forward. Von Hindenburg and von Ludendorff had already made their plans for a great offensive in the West with the aid of the troops presently to be released from the Russian front, and von Hutier was instructed to test the new tactical methods upon the *corpus vile* of the Russian right wing. This wing, the Twelfth Army under General Parski, was too demoralized to make serious resistance. By 29th August von Hutier had reached the river *Aug. 29.*

Aa, where it curves to follow the coast line, and was attacking at Keckau, on the Dvina, ten miles south of Riga, while German warships were threatening the entrance to the Gulf. On Saturday, 1st September, the Germans crossed the Dvina at Uexkull, eighteen *Sept. 1.*

miles up-stream from Riga, and by the Sunday evening had cut the Dvinsk railway and were five miles east of the Dvina, *Sept. 2.*

beyond the little river Jaegel. The defences of Riga were turned on the south-east, and on Monday morning Parski evacuated the city after blowing up the bridges. The *Sept. 3.*

same day the Germans entered, and, in spite of the heroic resistance of certain "battalions of death" on the river line, were by the evening east

of the Dvina on a broad front. The Russian Twelfth Army fell back north-eastward along the coast on the road to Petrograd, and by the 5th

Sept. 5. was thirty miles from the city, on a wavering front of sixty miles. Its left still held Friedrichstadt, west of the Dvina, but its right on the coast was in rapid retreat, and its centre was pushed up the valley of the Livonian Aa towards Venden. Alexeiev was sent post-haste to deal with the situation, and he was able to steady the retreat, and form a kind of front. But he could not save Friedrichstadt, and von Hutier widened the breach at his leisure, taking

Sept. 23. Jacobstadt on the 23rd, the bridgehead on the Dvina seventy miles up-stream from Riga. The Germans did not press their attack with any haste, for they discerned with accuracy what was about to happen in Russia. It was not their business to waste good troops and ammunition in forcing a door which would speedily be thrown open.

So far from sobering the doctrinaires, the loss of Riga seemed to make them reckless. But it solemnized Kerenski, and for a moment swung him out of his detachment into an alliance with the soldiers. He reimposed the death penalty in the army, and on 5th September sent Savin-

Sept. 5. kov, the acting Minister of War, to see Kornilov at Mogilev. What happened thereafter is still obscure in some of its details, but the main events are clear. Savinkov warned the Commander-in-Chief that the Bolsheviks were threatening a rising in Petrograd within the week, and asked him to arrange to send a cavalry corps to the neigh-

bourhood of the capital. On the 7th, Savinkov left General Headquarters, and Vladimir Lvov arrived, apparently also sent by Kerenski. To him Kornilov presently admitted that he thought a dictatorship necessary, but that he did not care who was dictator—himself, Kaledin, Alexeiev, or Kerenski. Lvov, speaking, as Kornilov thought, for the Prime Minister, declared that Kornilov should be the dictator. Next day Kornilov in all good faith drew up a plan for a Council of National Defence, with himself as President and Kerenski as Vice-President. Then he spoke to Kerenski on the telephone, and realized that either Lvov had exceeded his commission or the Prime Minister had changed his mind. The latter agreed to come to Mogilev on the 9th; but on that day Kornilov received a peremptory order to hand over his command to General Lukomski and come to Petrograd, while at the same time he heard that Lvov had been arrested. Then followed another message appointing Klembovski Commander-in-Chief; but neither he nor Lukomski would take up the post, and Kornilov remained Generalissimo. Krymov, with the 3rd Cavalry Corps, was already moving towards Petrograd, in accordance with the arrangement with Savinkov. On 10th September the Government suddenly proclaimed Kornilov a traitor.

The plain, straightforward soldier did not know what to think. He understood that, with the Germans pouring across the Dvina on the road to Petrograd, Kerenski had accepted his view of the measures required. He took the proposals of Savin-

kov and Lvov at their face value, and obeyed them as orders from the Government. When he received the confusing messages of the 8th, 9th, and 10th he conceived it his duty to disregard them, knowing that Von Hutier would not wait on the vacillations of civilian statesmen. Accordingly he allowed Krymov to continue his advance to Petrograd. It is harder to explain Kerenski's conduct. Probably he had not made up his mind when he dispatched Savinkov and Lvov to Mogilev, and in all likelihood both exceeded their instructions. He had toyed with the idea of a dictatorship, but at the last moment his courage failed him. He had never been on good terms with Kornilov, and he suddenly awoke to the fact that he was about to entrust the future of his country to one whom many parties labelled a reactionary. He therefore flung himself into the arms of the Soviets, who discovered that in this matter the Bolsheviks were their allies. He proclaimed himself Commander-in-Chief, and put himself at the head of the Petrograd troops. Red Guards were hurriedly enlisted, and the unfortunate Krymov found his communications cut in the rear. He found, too, no signs of the stand which he had been told the Government meant to make against the Bolsheviks; rather he found the Government and the Bolsheviks making common cause. Presently the Soviet emissaries came out under Tchernov to meet his cavalry, and informed them that Kornilov had been declared a traitor and that they were betraying the Revolution. Krymov, trapped and bewildered, saw his honour lost, and died by his own hand.

It remained to dispose of Kornilov, that uncon-

scious "traitor." Alexeiev was called in to help in the task. Kornilov loyally handed over his command, and, with his headquarters staff, was placed under arrest. Then followed a campaign of calumny against all the generals. Kaledin, the *hetman* of the Cossacks, was accused of complicity in Kornilov's movement, and summoned to stand his trial; but this his Cossacks forbade, and the affair ended in an apology from the Government. There was much talk of counter-revolutionary plots, but nothing was proved, and Gourko, who had been arrested, was released and allowed to go abroad. The whole business brought little credit to Kerenski. He could not disavow Savinkov and Lvov, and the plea of a misunderstanding is difficult to substantiate. He had resolved on a certain course, and asked for Kornilov's assistance; he changed his mind, and left Kornilov alone to bear the discredit of his former policy. The change of mind may have been just and wise, but it cannot excuse the treachery of his conduct to the man whom he punished for a course undertaken on his own instructions.

The Kornilov affair drove the few remaining Moderates out of the Cabinet. A new Council of Five was instituted—consisting of Kerenski, Terestchenko, General Verkhovski, Admiral Varderevski, and Nikitin—and Russia was proclaimed a republic. The condition of Petrograd went from bad to worse; the retreating Russian armies gave themselves over to the shameless work of pillaging their own countrymen; the sailors of the Baltic fleet murdered their officers wholesale; and in the press of Kronstadt—the worst nest of anarchy—Lenin lifted up his voice afresh. Meantime von Hutier, biding his time,

was slowly pressing his easy victory. On 12th

Oct. 12. October he brought the German fleet into play against the mutinous Russian warships. A large force was landed on the island of Oesel, in the Gulf of Riga, not eighty miles from

Oct. 18. the Russian naval base of Reval. By the 18th Moon and Dago islands had been occupied with little trouble. The Germans entered by the Irben channel south of Oesel, and cut off the Russian retreat through Moon Sound by a detachment which entered by Siele Sound and Kassar Bay. It was the very place where, in August 1915, Admiral Kannin had destroyed the German squadron which sought to land at Pernau. This success gave the enemy uninterrupted communications with the port of Riga and the command of the Livonian coast, so that they threatened the right rear of the retreating Twelfth Army. Reval was in

Oct. 21. instant danger, and on the 21st the Germans landed on the Esthonian coast east of Moon Island. The sword was now hanging over Petrograd itself.

In the capital constitution-making went merrily on. In the early days of October a so-called Democratic Conference was held, at which it was agreed to revive the Coalition Ministry, and to provide a provisional parliament, to be called the Council of the Republic, pending the calling of a Constituent Assembly. The new Ministry included four Cadets and a number of Moscow business men; and on 20th October it faced its parliament, the Council of the Republic. The proceedings were not harmonious. Alexeiev reported gloomily on the state of the army, and Kerenski's only expedient was to



The Islands and Straits of the Riga Gulf.

co-ordinate the General Staff, the Commissaries, and the regimental committees in one organization—such a debating society as had played into Cromwell's hands at Dunbar or had handicapped Marlborough in his Flanders campaigns. He attacked with violent denunciation the Bolsheviks, who had been his allies against Kornilov. It was his last performance as Prime Minister, for the power had already gone from him. A few days later he sent a message to America that Russia was worn out, and that the Allies must shoulder the burden of the war. He was himself worn out, and during the last months had been falling into that disease of "grandeur" which is the sure presage of disaster. He lived royally in the Winter Palace; he moved about attended by a glittering naval and military staff; he conducted himself with the *hauteur* of a monarch by divine right. The dark forces waiting in the shadows quickly observed the change, and decided that their hour had come. They had failed in the July revolution, for the time was not ripe; they had postponed their September attempt, since Kornilov had played their game; they were now ready to shatter a *régime* which they knew had no foundation.

If Lenin was the Mazzini of the Bolshevik party, Trotski was its Garibaldi and Cavour. By name Leo Braunstein, by birth an Odessa Jew, at the age of forty he saw the chance for which he had long waited, and had the courage to take it. Restlessly ambitious, he had none of the pure, cold fervour of Lenin. He was that formidable combination, a fanatic in ideals but a *politique* in methods. He was a man of action, adroit in seizing occasion,

swift in deed, unscrupulous to the last degree in the weapons he used ; but always conscious that he lived in a complex world, and ready to trim, intrigue, and compromise if the short road were barred. He began by capturing the Petrograd Soviet, of which he was now President. He then set to work to prepare a kind of General Staff, called the Military Revolutionary Committee, which co-operated with the Bolshevik elements in the Army and Navy and the industrial communities. He saw that the Army, which had defeated him in July, was now moribund ; he saw that the Moderates and the *bourgeoisie* were without cohesion. He observed that Kerenski had no party at his back, and that the apathy and despair of Russia made her an easy prey to even a small body who were armed and resolute. His first business was to make that body dictators ; his second to conclude peace with an enemy who would gladly be released for their grave task in the West ; his third to summon the proletariat of all nations to do what had been done in Russia. There was nothing new or profound in his creed ; it was the stalest and oldest in the world, and in every generation has appeared somewhere for a brief season, only to fall by its own weakness. But in this case it had such a field as history had never shown before. In the weary and bewildered circles of Russian statecraft Trotski appeared like a leopard among kine.

On Monday, 5th November, the Military Revolutionary Committee ordered the Petrograd garrison to place itself under their instructions. *Nov. 5.* Kerenski replied by suppressing the chief Bolshevik paper, and summoning the loyal

troops to defend the Government. On Tuesday,

Nov. 6. 6th November, the military cadets, or "Junkers," occupied the bridges, stations, and telegraph offices, and put a cordon round Kerenski's residence, the Winter Palace. On Wed-

Nov. 7. nesday Lenin arrived, and the Bolsheviks made their headquarters at the Smolny Institute, a girls' school in the suburbs, whence they issued a proclamation announcing the fall of the Government and the transfer of power to the Soviets. Some few regiments declared for Kerenski, but the majority went over to Trotsky; while the Cossacks, mindful of the insult to Kaledin, sulked in their tents. Hourly the Red Guards grew in number, sailors arrived from Kronstadt, and Trotsky ordered the occupation of all stations and strategic points. Early on the morning of Wednesday, the 7th, Kerenski had fled, leaving the Winter Palace in charge of Konovalov, his Minister of Commerce, with a garrison of "Junkers" and women. That day the Red Guards captured the palace, committing many brutalities on the helpless women and boys, and by the evening the whole of Petrograd was in Bolshevik hands. In the evening, at a meeting of the Petrograd Soviet, Trotsky and Lenin announced the success of the new revolution, and an All-Russia Congress of Soviets, meeting on the following day, ratified the decision. The govern-

Nov. 8. ment of the country was placed in the hands of a body called the Council of People's Commissioners, with Lenin as President, Trotsky Minister of Foreign Affairs, and an ancient revolutionary, one Ensign Krylenko, Commander-in-Chief of the remnants of the army.



Riga, the Gulf of Finland, and the



and Sea Approaches to Petrograd.

The new Government, as an oligarchy acting in the interests of a narrow class, proceeded to confiscate all lands not belonging to the proletariat, and to negotiate for an armistice with the enemy. It had, at any rate, the courage of its folly. Its military strength was of the slightest, and a couple of disciplined brigades could have overthrown it, but such were not at Kerenski's disposal. He raised, indeed, a kind of force with which he approached Tsarskoe Selo ; but, desirous of preventing bloodshed, he wasted time in delivering an oration, and the Red Guards scattered his buckram army. Thereafter he disappeared, no man knew whither and few men cared. Russia had lost all interest in the whirligig of politics. While the Red Guards were battering at the door of the Winter Palace, the people of Petrograd went callously about their ordinary avocations, the trams were running as usual, and in the chief theatre a large audience was being entertained by M. Chaliapin.

So fell one of the most curious figures of the war. The character of Alexander Kerenski will, it is likely, present to the historian of the future the enigma which he presented to his contemporaries. He was the Hamlet of the Revolution, and, like his prototype, might lament—

“What a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me !”

The world could see his failure, but it could not judge the crushing difficulties of his task. He had the defects of his qualities ; for something febrile weakened his imaginative power, and sudden bursts

of petulance impaired the vigour of his courage. His chief defect was Hamlet's; he saw too far around his problems to have the single heart which is easy to the narrow vision. He saw the faults of all parties, and—what was more fatal—he saw the merits. He aimed at the impossible, the reconciliation of the Russian people in a new purpose. He did not succeed; but let us at least admit the sad nobility of his aim. It has been argued that if he had been less tolerant and less cross-bench in mind, if he had flung in his lot with the Moderates or the soldiers before it was too late, he might have saved his country. Such a view belongs to the dangerous science of hypothetics, and it is doubtful if it contains more truth than the other view, which holds that, if the Western Allies had been more complaisant to the demands of the Russian Left, Kerenski would not have fallen. It is more likely that neither plan would have yielded any better results. There was no weapon left in Russia for a statesman to fight with. Army, Cossacks, Cadets, peasants, *intelligentsia*, all broke in the hand of him who used them. The fates had decreed that no tinkering or welding could save the fabric. Russia had to go into the furnace to be cast anew.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I.

THE THIRD BATTLE OF YPRES.

SIR DOUGLAS HAIG'S FOURTH DISPATCH.—PART II.

THE SUMMER CAMPAIGN.

Preparations for the Messines Attack.

(28) THE preparations for the attack on the Messines-Wytschaete Ridge were necessarily as elaborate as those undertaken before either the Somme or the Arras battles, and demanded an equal amount of time, forethought, and labour. They were carried out, moreover, under circumstances of exceptional difficulty; for the enemy's positions completely overlooked our lines, and much of the area behind them.

Neither labour nor material was available in sufficient quantity for the Messines offensive until the prior demands of the Arras operations had been satisfied. Nevertheless, our preparations in the northern area had been proceeded with steadily, so far as the means at our disposal would allow, ever since the formation of definite plans in the late autumn of 1916.

A large railway programme had been commenced, and as soon as it was possible to divert larger supplies northwards, work was pushed on with remarkable speed. Great progress was made with road construction, and certain roads were selected for extension as soon as our objectives should be gained. Forward dumps of material were made for this purpose, and in the days following the 7th June roads were carried forward with great rapidity to Messines, Wytschaete,

and Oosttaverne, across country so completely destroyed by shell-fire that it was difficult to trace where the original road had run.

A special problem arose in connection with the water supply. Pipe lines were taken well forward from existing lakes, from catch pits constructed on the Kemmel Hills, and from sterilizing barges on the Lys. Provision was made for the rapid extension of these lines. By the 15th June they had reached Messines, Wytschaete, and the Dam Strasse, and were supplying water at the rate of between 450,000 and 600,000 gallons daily.

In addition, arrangements were made for the transport of water, rations, and stores by pack animals and carrying parties. So efficiently did these arrangements work that during the attack water reached the troops within twenty to forty minutes of the taking of new positions, while in one case carrying parties arrived with packs, and dumps were formed within four minutes of the capture of the objective.

Underground Warfare.

(29) A special feature of the attack on the Messines-Wytschaete Ridge, and one unique in warfare, was furnished by the explosion of nineteen deep mines at the moment of assault.

The inception of a deep mining offensive on the Second Army front dated from July 1915; but the proposal to conduct offensive mining on a grand scale was not definitely adopted till January 1916. From that date onwards, as the necessary labour became available, deep mining for offensive purposes gradually developed, in spite of great difficulties, from water-bearing strata and active countermining by the enemy.

In all, twenty-four mines were constructed, four of which were outside the front ultimately selected for our offensive, while one other was lost as the result of a mine blown by the enemy. Many of these mines had been completed for twelve

months prior to our offensive, and constant and anxious work was needed to ensure their safety. The enemy also had a deep mining system, and was aware of his danger.

At Hill 60 continuous underground fighting took place for over ten months prior to our attack, and only by the greatest skill, persistence, and disregard of danger on the part of our tunnellers were the two mines laid by us at this point saved from destruction. At the time of our offensive the enemy was known to be driving a gallery which ultimately would have cut into the gallery leading to the Hill 60 mines. By careful listening it was judged that if our offensive took place on the date arranged the enemy's gallery would just fail to reach us. So he was allowed to proceed.

At the Bluff, also, underground fighting went on incessantly. Between the 16th January 1916 and the 7th June 1917 twenty-seven camouflets were blown in this locality alone, of which seventeen were blown by us and ten by the enemy. After the 1st February 1917 the enemy showed signs of great uneasiness, and blew several heavy mines and camouflets in the endeavour to interfere with our working. One of these blows destroyed our gallery to the Spanbroekmolen mine. For three months this mine was cut off, and was only recovered by strenuous efforts on the day preceding the Messines attack. The Spanbroekmolen mine formed the largest crater of any of those blown, the area of complete obliteration having a diameter of over 140 yards.

A total of 8,000 yards of gallery were driven in the construction of these mines, and over one million pounds of explosives were used in them. The simultaneous discharge of such an enormous aggregate of explosive is without parallel in land mining, and no actual experience existed of the effects which would be produced. In these circumstances, the fact that no hitch of any kind occurred in the operation, and that the effects of the discharges were precisely such as had been foretold, reflects the very highest credit upon those responsible for the planning and construction of the mines.

The Messines Battle.—Description of Front.

(30) The group of hills known as the Messines-Wytschaete Ridge lies about midway between the towns of Armentières and Ypres. Situated at the eastern end of the range of abrupt, isolated hills which divides the valleys of the river Lys and the river Yser, it links up that range with the line of rising ground which from Wytschaete stretches north-eastwards to the Ypres-Menin road, and then northwards past Passchendaele to Staden.

The village of Messines, situated on the southern spur of the ridge, commands a wide view of the valley of the Lys, and enfiladed the British lines to the south. North-west of Messines the village of Wytschaete, situated at the point of the salient and on the highest part of the ridge, from its height of about 260 feet commands even more completely the town of Ypres and the whole of the old British positions in the Ypres salient.

The German Defences.

(31) The German front line skirted the western foot of the ridge in a deep curve from the river Lys opposite Frelinghien to a point just short of the Menin Road. The line of trenches then turned north-west past Hooze and Wieltje, following the slight rise known as the Pilckem Ridge to the Yser Canal at Boesinghe. The enemy's second-line system followed the crest of the Messines-Wytschaete Ridge, forming an inner curve.

In addition to these defences of the ridge itself, two chord positions had been constructed across the base of the salient from south to north. The first lay slightly to the east of the hamlet of Oosttaverne, and was known as the Oosttaverne Line. The second chord position, known as the Warneton Line, crossed the Lys at Warneton, and ran roughly parallel to the Oosttaverne Line a little more than a mile to the east of it.

The natural advantages of the position were exceptional, and during more than two years of occupation the enemy had devoted the greatest skill and industry to developing them to the utmost. Besides the villages of Messines and Wyt-schaete, which were organized as main centres of resistance, numerous woods, farms, and hamlets lent themselves to the construction of defensive points.

Captured documents and the statements of prisoners proved the importance attached by the enemy to the position. His troops in the line were told that the coming battle might well prove decisive, and that they were to resist to the last. They were assured that strong reserves were available to come to their assistance and to restore the battle should the British attack succeed in penetrating their lines.

Preparations completed.

(32) The final preparations for the assault on the Messines-Wyt-schaete Ridge were completed punctually, and with a thoroughness of organization and attention to detail which are beyond praise. The excellence of the arrangements reflects the highest credit on the Second Army Commander, General Sir Herbert Plumer, and his Staff, as well as on the Commanders and Staffs of the various formations engaged.

The actual front selected for attack extended from a point opposite St. Yves to Mount Sorrel inclusive, a distance, following the curve of the salient, of between nine and ten miles. Our final objective was the Oosttaverne Line, which lay between these two points. The greatest depth of our attack was therefore about two and a half miles.

As the date for the attack drew near fine weather favoured the work of our airmen, and artillery and wire-cutting, the bombardment of the enemy's defences and strong points, and the shelling of his communications, billets, and back areas continued steadily. Counter-battery work was undertaken with great energy and with striking success.

The Assault.

(33) At 3.10 a.m. on the 7th June the nineteen mines were exploded simultaneously beneath the enemy's defences. At the same moment our guns opened and our infantry assault was launched. Covered by a concentrated bombardment, which overwhelmed the enemy's trenches and to a great extent neutralized his batteries, our troops swept over the German foremost defences all along the line.

The attack proceeded from the commencement in almost exact accordance with the time-table. The enemy's first trench system offered little resistance to our advance, and the attacking brigades—English, Irish, Australian, and New Zealand—pressed on up the slopes of the ridge to the assault of the crest line.

At 5.30 a.m. Ulster regiments had already reached their second objectives, including l'Enfer Hill and the southern defences of Wytschaete, while on their left a South of Ireland Division fought their way through Wytschaete Wood. At 7 a.m. New Zealand troops had captured Messines. Men from the western counties of England had cleared the Grand Bois. Other English county regiments had reached the Dam Strasse, and all along the battle front our second objectives had been gained.

Only at a few isolated points did the resistance of the enemy's infantry cause any serious delay. North-east of Messines our infantry were held up for a time by machine-gun fire from a strong point known as Fanny's Farm, but the arrival of a tank enabled our progress to be resumed. So rapid was the advance of our infantry, however, that only a few tanks could get forward in time to come into action. Heavy fighting took place in Wytschaete, and further north London troops encountered a serious obstacle in another strong point known as the White Château. This redoubt was captured while the morning was yet young, and before mid-day the two Irish divisions had fought their way side by side through the defences of Wytschaete.

Our troops then began to move down the eastern slopes of the ridge, and the divisions in the centre of our attack, who had farthest to go, gradually drew level with those on either flank. About 2,000 prisoners had already been brought in, and Australian and English troops had reached the first of the enemy's guns. Our own guns had begun to move forward.

Further fighting took place in Ravine Wood, where English county regiments and London troops killed many Germans, and short-lived resistance was encountered at other points among the many woods and farmhouses. Bodies of the enemy continued to hold out in the eastern end of Battle Wood, and in strong points constructed in the spoil banks of the Ypres-Comines Canal. Except at these points, our troops gained their final objectives on both flanks early in the afternoon. In the centre we had reached a position running approximately parallel to the Oosttaverne Line and from 400 to 800 yards to the west of it. The guns required for the attack upon this line had been brought forward, and the troops and tanks detailed to take part were moving up steadily. Meanwhile the bridges and roads leading out of the triangle formed by the river Lys and the canal were kept under the fire of our artillery.

The final attack began soon afterwards, and by 3.45 p.m. the village of Oosttaverne had been captured. At 4 p.m. troops from the northern and western counties of England entered the Oosttaverne Line east of the village and captured two batteries of German field guns. Half an hour later other English battalions broke through the enemy's position further north. Parties of the enemy were surrendering freely, and his casualties were reported to be very heavy. By the evening the Oosttaverne line had been taken, and our objectives had been gained.

The rapidity with which the attack had been carried through, and the destruction caused by our artillery, made it impossible at first to form more than a rough estimate of our

captures. When the final reckoning had been completed, it was found that they included 7,200 prisoners, 67 guns, 94 trench mortars and 294 machine guns.

Subsequent Operations.

(34) During the night our infantry consolidated the captured positions ; while tanks patrolled the ground east of the Oosttaverne Line, and in the early morning of the 8th June assisted in the repulse of an enemy counter-attack up the Wambeke Valley. At 4 a.m. on the same morning our troops captured a small portion of German trench near Septième Barn, where the enemy had resisted our first attack. That evening, at 7 p.m., after an intense bombardment, the enemy counter-attacked along practically the whole of our new line, but was repulsed at all points.

Consolidation and the establishment of advanced posts continued during the following four days, in the course of which Australian troops captured La Potterie Farm, south-east of Messines, and the hamlet of Gapaard was occupied.

Our progress on the right of the battle front made the enemy's positions between the Lys river and St. Yves very dangerous, and he now gradually began to evacuate them. Our patrols kept close touch with the enemy, and by the evening of the 14th June the whole of the old German front and support lines north of the Lys had passed into our possession.

That evening we again attacked south and east of Messines and on both sides of the Ypres-Comines Canal, and met with complete success. The strong points in which the enemy had held out north of the canal were captured, and our line was advanced on practically the whole front from the river Warnave to Klein Zillebeke.

By this operation the Second Army front was pushed forward as far as was then desirable. Henceforward our efforts in this area were directed to putting the line gained in a state of defence and establishing forward posts.

The Northern Operations.—Preparations renewed.

(35) As soon as this preliminary operation had been successfully accomplished, it became possible to take in hand our final dispositions for our main offensive east and north of Ypres. Owing to the great extent of front to be dealt with, the Fifth Army took over command of the front from Observatory Ridge to Boesinghe on the 10th June, and the whole of our available resources were directed to completing the preparations for the attack.

It had been agreed that French troops should take part in these operations, and should extend my left flank northwards beyond Boesinghe. The relief by British troops of the French troops holding the coast sector from St. Georges to the sea was accordingly arranged for, and was successfully completed ten days later. In the first week of July the Belgian troops holding the front from Boesinghe to Noordschoote were relieved by the First French Army, under the command of General Anthoine.

The various problems inseparable from the mounting of a great offensive, the improvement and construction of roads and railways, the provision of an adequate water supply and of accommodation for troops, the formation of dumps, the digging of dug-outs, subways, and trenches, and the assembling and registering of guns, had all to be met and overcome in the new theatre of battle, under conditions of more than ordinary disadvantage.

On no previous occasion, not excepting the attack on the Messines-Wytschaete Ridge, had the whole of the ground from which we had to attack been so completely exposed to the enemy's observation. Even after the enemy had been driven from the Messines-Wytschaete Ridge, he still possessed excellent direct observation over the salient from the east and south-east, as well as from the Pilckem Ridge to the north. Nothing existed at Ypres to correspond with the vast caves and cellars which proved of such value in the days prior to the

Arras battle, and the provision of shelter for the troops presented a very serious problem.

The work of the Tunnelling Companies of the Royal Engineers deserves special mention in this connection. It was carried on under great difficulties, both from the unreliable nature of the ground and from hostile artillery, which paid particular attention to all indications of mining activity on our part.

Minor Operations continued.

(36) Meanwhile the policy of maintaining activity on other parts of my front was continued.

Further ground was gained on Greenland Hill, and on the 14th June British troops captured by a surprise attack the German trench lines on the crest of Infantry Hill, east of Monchy-le-Preux, with 175 prisoners. This important position had already been the scene of a great deal of fierce fighting, and during the following six weeks was frequently counter-attacked. Our advanced posts changed hands frequently ; but the principal line, giving the observation which lent importance to the position, remained consistently in our possession.

Early in May local attacks had been undertaken by Canadian troops in the neighbourhood of Souchez river, which formed the prelude to a long-sustained series of minor operations directed against the defence of Lens. Substantial progress was made in this area on the 5th and 19th June, and five days later North Midland troops captured an important position on the slopes of a small hill south-west of Lens, forcing the enemy to make a considerable withdrawal on both sides of the river. Canadian troops took La Coulotte on the 26th June, and by the morning of the 28th June had reached the outskirts of Avion.

On the evening of the 28th June a deliberate and carefully-thought-out scheme was put into operation by the First Army, to give the enemy the impression that he was being attacked on a twelve-mile front from Gavrelle to Hulluch.

Elaborate demonstrations were made on the whole of this front, accompanied by discharges of gas, smoke, and thermit, and a mock raid was successfully carried out south-east of Loos. At the same time real attacks were made, with complete success, by English troops on a front of 2,000 yards opposite Oppy, and by Canadian and North Midland troops on a front of two and a half miles astride the Souchez river. All our objectives were gained, including Eleu dit Leauvette and the southern half of Avion, with some 300 prisoners and a number of machine guns.

The Lombartzyde Attack.

(37) The appearance of British troops on the coast seems to have alarmed the enemy and caused him to launch a small counter-offensive.

The positions which we had taken over from the French in this area included a narrow strip of polder and dune, some two miles in length and from 600 and 1,200 yards in depth, lying on the right bank of the canalized Yser between the Plasschendaele Canal, south of Lombartzyde, and the coast. Midway between the Plasschendaele Canal and the sea these positions were divided into two parts by the dyke known as the Geleide Creek, which flows into the Yser south-west of Lombartzyde. If the enemy could succeed in driving us back across the canal and river on the whole of this front, he would render the defence of the sector much easier for him.

Early on the morning of the 10th July an intense bombardment was opened against these positions. Our defences, which consisted chiefly of breastworks built in the sand, were flattened, and all the bridges across the Yser below the Geleide Creek, as well as the bridges across the creek itself, were destroyed.

At 6.30 p.m. the enemy's infantry attacked, and the isolated garrison of our positions north of the Geleide Creek, consisting of troops from a Northamptonshire battalion and a Rifle battalion, were overwhelmed after an obstinate and

most gallant resistance. Of these two battalions, some 70 men and four officers succeeded during the nights of the 10th-11th and 11th-12th July in swinging across the Yser to our lines.

On the southern half of the point attacked, opposite Lombartzyde, the enemy also broke into our lines ; but here, where our positions had greater depth, and communication across the Yser was still possible, his troops were ejected by our counter-attack.

The Third Battle of Ypres.—Preliminary Stages.

(38) By this date the preparations for the combined Allied offensive were far advanced, and the initial stages of the battle had already begun.

A definite aerial offensive had been launched, and the effective work of our airmen once more enabled our batteries to carry out successfully a methodical and comprehensive artillery programme.

So effective was our counter-battery work that the enemy commenced to withdraw his guns to places of greater security. On this account, and also for other reasons, the date of our attack, which had been fixed for the 25th July, was postponed for three days. This postponement enabled a portion of our own guns to be moved further forward, and gave our airmen the opportunity to locate accurately the enemy's new battery positions. Subsequently a succession of days of bad visibility, combined with the difficulties experienced by our Allies in getting their guns into position in their new area, decided me to sanction a further postponement until the 31st July.

In addition to our artillery bombardment, gas was used extensively during the fortnight preceding the attack, and a number of highly successful raids were carried out along the whole front north of the Lys.

The Yser Canal crossed.

(39) As the date of the attack drew near, careful watch was maintained lest the enemy should endeavour to disarrange our plans by withdrawing to one of his rear lines of defence. On the 27th July the German forward defence system was found to be unoccupied on the northern portion of the Fifth Army front. British Guards and French troops seized the opportunity to cross the Yser Canal, and established themselves firmly in the enemy's first and support trenches on a front of about 3,000 yards east and north of Boesinghe. All hostile attempts to eject them failed, and during the night seventeen bridges were thrown across the canal by our troops.

This operation greatly facilitated the task of the Allied troops on this part of the battle front, to whose attack the Yser Canal had previously presented a formidable obstacle. Whether the withdrawal which made it possible was due to the desire of the German infantry to escape our bombardment, or to their fear that our attack would be inaugurated by the explosion of a new series of mines, is uncertain.

Plan of First Attack.

(40) The front of the Allied attack extended from the Lys river opposite Deulemont northwards to beyond Steenstraat, a distance of over fifteen miles; but the main blow was to be delivered by the Fifth Army, on a front of about seven and a half miles, from the Zillebeke-Zandvoorde Road to Boesinghe, inclusive.

Covering the right of the Fifth Army, the task of the Second Army was to advance a short distance only. Its principal object at this stage was to increase the area threatened by the attack and so force the enemy to distribute the fire of his artillery. I had other tasks in view for it at a later period.

On the left of the Fifth Army the First French Army was to advance its right in close touch with the British forces and

secure them from counter-attack from the north. This entailed an advance of considerable depth over difficult country, and ultimately involved the capture of the whole peninsula lying between the Yser Canal and the floods of the St. Jansbeek and the Martjevaart.

The plan of attack on the Fifth Army front was to advance in a series of bounds, with which the right of the First French Army was to keep step. These bounds were arranged so as to suit as far as possible both the position of the principal lines of the enemy's defences and the configuration of the ground.

It was hoped that in this first attack our troops would succeed in establishing themselves on the crest of the high ground east of Ypres, on which a strong flank could be formed for subsequent operations, and would also secure the crossings of the Steenbeek. For this purpose four army corps were placed at the disposal of General Sir Hubert Gough.

The Battle opened.

(41) At 3.50 a.m. on the morning of the 31st July the combined attack was launched. English, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh troops delivered the main assault on the British front.

Preceded at zero hour by discharges of thermit and oil drums, and covered by an accurate artillery barrage from a great number of guns, the Allied infantry entered the German lines at all points. The enemy's barrage was late and weak, and our casualties were light.

On the greater part of the front of the main attack the resistance of the German infantry was quickly overcome and rapid progress was made. The difficult country east of Ypres, where the Menin Road crosses the crest of the Wyt-schaete-Passchendaele Ridge, formed, however, the key to the enemy's position, and here the most determined opposition was encountered. None the less, the attacking brigades, including a number of Lancashire battalions, regiments from

all parts of England, and a few Scottish and Irish battalions, fought their way steadily forward through Shrewsbury Forest and Sanctuary Wood and captured Stirling Castle, Hooge and the Bellewarde Ridge.

Farther north British and French troops carried the whole of the first German trench system with scarcely a check, and proceeded in accordance with the time-table to the assault of the enemy's second line of defence. Scottish troops took Verlorenhoek, and, continuing their advance, by 6 a.m. had reached Frezenberg, where for a short time stiff fighting took place before the village and the strong defences around it were captured. South of Pilckem a Prussian Guard battalion was broken up by Welsh troops, after a brief resistance, and Pilckem was taken. Sharp fighting occurred also at a number of other points, but in every instance the enemy's opposition was overcome.

At 9 a.m. the whole of our second objectives north of the Ypres-Roulers Railway were in our possession, with the exception of a strong point north of Frezenberg, known as Pommern Redoubt, where fighting was still going on. Within an hour this redoubt also had been captured by West Lancashire Territorials. On our left French troops made equal progress, capturing their objective in precise accordance with programme and with little loss.

By this time our field artillery had begun to move up, and by 9.30 a.m. a number of batteries were already in action in their forward positions. The Allied advance on this portion of our front was resumed at the hour planned. English county troops captured St. Julien, and from that point northwards our final objectives were reached and passed. Highland Territorials, Welsh and Guards battalions secured the crossings of the Steenbeek; and French troops, having also taken their final objectives, advanced beyond them and seized Bixschoote. A hostile counter-attack launched against the point of junction of the French and British Armies was completely repulsed.

Meanwhile, south of the Ypres-Roulers Railway, very heavy and continuous fighting was taking place on both sides of the Menin Road.

After the capture of the German first line system our troops on this part of our front had advanced in time with the divisions on their left against their second objectives. Great opposition was at once encountered in front of two small woods known as Inverness Copse and Glencorse Wood, while further south a strong point in Shrewsbury Forest held out against our attacks till the morning of the 1st August. North of Glencorse Wood English troops continued their advance in spite of the enemy's resistance, and reached the village of Westhoek.

Later in the day heavy counter-attacks began to develop from south of the Menin Road northwards to St. Julien. Our artillery caused great loss to the enemy in these attacks, although the weather was unfavourable for aeroplane work, and observation for our batteries was difficult. At Inverness Copse and Glencorse Wood a few tanks succeeded in reaching the fighting line, in spite of exceedingly bad ground, and came into action with our infantry. Fierce fighting took place all day, but the enemy was unable to shake our hold upon the ridge.

Results of First Day.

(42) At the end of the day, therefore, our troops on the Fifth Army front had carried the German first system of defence south of Westhoek. Except at Westhoek itself, where they were established on the outskirts of the village, they had already gained the whole of the crest of the ridge, and had denied the enemy observation over the Ypres plain. Farther north they had captured the enemy's second line also as far as St. Julien. North of that village they had passed beyond the German second line, and held the line of the Steenbeek to our junction with the French.

On our left flank our Allies had admirably completed the

important task allotted to them. Close touch had been kept with the British troops on their right throughout the day. All and more than all their objectives had been gained rapidly and at exceptionally light cost, and the flank of the Allied advance had been effectively secured.

Meanwhile, the attack on the Second Army front had also met with complete success. On the extreme right New Zealand troops had carried La Basse Ville after a sharp fight lasting some fifty minutes. On the left English troops had captured Hollebeke and the difficult ground north of the bend of the Ypres-Comines Canal and east of Battle Wood. Between these two points our line had been advanced on the whole front for distances varying from 200 to 800 yards.

Over 6,100 prisoners, including 133 officers, were captured by us in this battle. In addition to our gains in prisoners and ground we also captured some 25 guns, while a further number of prisoners and guns were taken by our Allies.

Effect of the Weather.

(43) The weather had been threatening throughout the day, and had rendered the work of our aeroplanes very difficult from the commencement of the battle. During the afternoon, while fighting was still in progress, rain began, and fell steadily all night. Thereafter, for four days, the rain continued without cessation, and for several days afterwards the weather remained stormy and unsettled. The low-lying, clayey soil, torn by shells and sodden with rain, turned to a succession of vast muddy pools. The valleys of the choked and overflowing streams were speedily transformed into long stretches of bog, impassable except by a few well-defined tracks, which became marks for the enemy's artillery. To leave these tracks was to risk death by drowning, and in the course of the subsequent fighting on several occasions both men and pack animals were lost in this way. In these conditions operations of any magnitude became impossible, and the resumption of our

offensive was necessarily postponed until a period of fine weather should allow the ground to recover.

As had been the case in the Arras battle, this unavoidable delay in the development of our offensive was of the greatest service to the enemy. Valuable time was lost, the troops opposed to us were able to recover from the disorganization produced by our first attack, and the enemy was given the opportunity to bring up reinforcements.

Hostile Counter-Attacks.—St. Julien and Westhoek.

(44) During the night of the 31st July and on the two following days the enemy delivered further counter-attacks against our new line, and in particular made determined efforts to dislodge us from the high ground between the Menin Road and the Ypres-Roulers Railway, and to recover his second line system between Frezenberg and St. Julien. In this he completely failed. The violence of his artillery fire compelled us, however, to withdraw temporarily from St. Julien, though we retained a bridgehead across the Steenbeek, just north of the village.

In spite of these counter-attacks and the great but unavoidable hardships from which our troops were suffering, steady progress was made with the consolidation of the captured ground, and every opportunity was taken to improve the line already gained.

On the 3rd August St. Julien was reoccupied without serious opposition, and our line linked up with the position we had retained on the right bank of the Steenbeek further north. A week later a successful minor operation carried out by English troops gave us complete possession of Westhoek. Seven hostile counter-attacks within the following four days broke down before our defence.

During this period certain centres of resistance in the neighbourhood of Kortekeer Cabaret were cleared up by our Allies, and a number of fortified farmhouses, lying across the front of the French position, were reduced in turn.

Lens Operations resumed.—Hill 70.

(45) Towards the middle of August a slight improvement took place in the weather, and advantage was taken of this to launch our second attack east of Ypres. Thereafter unsettled weather again set in, and the month closed as the wettest August that has been known for many years.

On the day preceding this attack at Ypres a highly successful operation was carried out in the neighbourhood of Lens, whereby the situation of our forces in that sector was greatly improved. At the same time the threat to Lens itself was rendered more immediate and more insistent, and the enemy was prevented from concentrating the whole of his attention and resources upon the front of our main offensive.

At 4.25 a.m. on the 15th August the Canadian Corps attacked on a front of 4,000 yards south-east and east of Loos. The objectives consisted of the strongly fortified hill known as Hill 70, which had been reached, but not held, in the battle of Loos on the 25th September 1915, and also the mining suburbs of Cité Ste. Elizabeth, Cité St. Émile, and Cité St. Laurent, together with the whole of Bois Rasé and the western half of Bois Hugo. The observation from Hill 70 had been very useful to the enemy, and in our possession materially increased our command over the defences of Lens.

Practically the whole of these objectives were gained rapidly at light cost, and in exact accordance with plan. Only at the farthest apex of our advance a short length of German trench west of Cité St. Auguste resisted our first assault. This position was again attacked on the afternoon of the following day, and captured after a fierce struggle lasting far into the night.

A number of local counter-attacks on the morning of the 15th August were repulsed, and in the evening a powerful attack delivered across the open by a German reserve division was broken up with heavy loss. In addition to the enemy's other casualties, 1,120 prisoners from three German divisions were captured by us.

The Ypres Battle.—Langemarck.

(46) Close upon the heels of this success, at 4.45 a.m. on the 16th August our second attack was launched east and north of Ypres, on a front extending from the north-west corner of Inverness Copse to our junction with the French south of St. Janshoek. On our left the French undertook the task of clearing up the remainder of the Bixschoote peninsula.

On the left of the British attack the English brigades detailed for the assault captured the hamlet of Wijdendrift and reached the southern outskirts of Langemarck. Here some resistance was encountered, but by 8 a.m. the village had been taken, after sharp fighting. Our troops then proceeded to attack the portion of the Langemarck-Gheluvelt Line which formed their final objective, and an hour later had gained this also, with the exception of a short length of trench north-east of Langemarck. Two small counter-attacks were repulsed without difficulty.

The attack of the First French Army delivered at the same hour was equally successful. On the right a few fortified farms in the neighbourhood of the Steenbeek again gave trouble, and held out for a time. Elsewhere our allies gained their objectives rapidly, and once more at exceptionally light cost. The bridgehead of Drie Grachten was secured, and the whole of the peninsula cleared of the enemy.

In the centre of the British attack the enemy's resistance was more obstinate. The difficulty of making deep-mined dug-outs in soil where water lay within a few feet of the surface of the ground had compelled the enemy to construct in the ruins of farms and in other suitable localities a number of strong points or "pill-boxes" built of reinforced concrete often many feet thick.

These field forts, distributed in depth all along the front of our advance, offered a serious obstacle to progress. They were heavily armed with machine guns, and manned by men determined to hold on at all costs. Many were reduced as our

troops advanced, but others held out throughout the day, and delayed the arrival of our supports. In addition, weather conditions made aeroplane observation practically impossible, with the result that no warning was received of the enemy's counter-attacks, and our infantry obtained little artillery help against them. When, therefore, later in the morning a heavy counter-attack developed in the neighbourhood of the Wieltje-Passchendaale Road, our troops, who had reached their final objectives at many points in this area also, were gradually compelled to fall back.

On the left centre West Lancashire Territorials and troops from other English counties established themselves on a line running north from St. Julien to the old German third line due east of Langemarck. This line they maintained against the enemy's attacks, and thereby secured the flank of our gains further north.

On the right of the British attack the enemy again developed the main strength of his resistance. At the end of a day of very heavy fighting, except for small gains of ground on the western edge of Glencorse Wood and north of Westhoek, the situation south of St. Julien remained unchanged.

In spite of this partial check on the southern portion of our attack, the day closed as a decided success for the Allies. A wide gap had been made in the old German third line system, and over 2,100 prisoners and some thirty guns had been captured.

Effect of Hostile Resistance.—Methods revised.

(47) The strength of the resistance developed by the enemy at this stage in the neighbourhood of the Menin Road decided me to extend the flank of the next attack southwards. It was undesirable, however, either to increase the already wide front of attack for which the Fifth Army was responsible, or to divide between two armies the control of the attack against the main ridge itself. I therefore determined to extend the left of the Second Army northwards, entrusting the attack upon the

whole of the high ground crossed by the Menin Road to General Sir Herbert Plumer as a single self-contained operation, to be carried out in conjunction with the attacks of the Fifth Army further north.

During the wet weather which prevailed throughout the remainder of the month, our efforts were confined to a number of small operations east and north-east of Ypres, designed to reduce certain of the more important of the enemy's strong points. In the meantime the necessary rearrangements of the British forces were pushed on as rapidly as possible, so that our new attack might be ready directly the weather should improve sufficiently to enable it to be undertaken.

These arrangements included a modification of our artillery tactics, to meet the situation created by the change in the enemy's methods of defence.

Our recent successes had conclusively proved that the enemy's infantry were unable to hold the strongest defences against a properly mounted attack, and that increasing the number of his troops in his forward defence systems merely added to his losses. Accordingly, the enemy had adopted a system of elastic defence, in which his forward trench lines were held only in sufficient strength to disorganize the attack, while the bulk of his forces were kept in close reserve, ready to deliver a powerful and immediate blow which might recover the positions overrun by our troops before we had had time to consolidate them.

In the heavy fighting east of Ypres these tactics had undoubtedly met with a certain measure of success. While unable to drive us back from the ridge, they had succeeded, in combination with the state of the ground and weather, in checking our progress. This new policy, for our early knowledge of which, as well as for other valuable information concerning the enemy's dispositions and intentions throughout the battle, much credit is due to the zeal and efficiency of my Intelligence Service, necessarily entailed corresponding changes in our method of attack.

Minor Operations.

(48) In the interval, on the 19th, 22nd, and 27th August, positions of considerable local importance in the neighbourhood of St. Julien were captured with some hundreds of prisoners, as the result of minor attacks conducted under the most unfavourable conditions of ground and weather. The ground gained represented an advance of about 800 yards on a front of over two miles. In combination with the attack of the 22nd August, English troops also attacked astride the Menin Road, and after six days of continuous local fighting established themselves in the western edge of Inverness Copse.

Meanwhile, in pursuance of my policy of compelling the enemy to guard himself on other fronts, successful minor operations had been undertaken elsewhere. On the Lens front, Canadian troops attacked on the 21st August, and carried the line of German trenches skirting the town to the south-west and west, taking 200 prisoners. Farther south, North-country troops attacked on the 26th August east of Hargicourt, and captured the enemy's advanced positions on a front of a mile. In this operation 136 prisoners were taken, and on the 9th and 11th September our gains were extended and further prisoners secured.

The Ypres Battle.—Preparations for the Third Attack completed.

(49) At the beginning of September the weather gradually improved, and artillery and other preparations for my next attack proceeded steadily. Both the extent of the preparations required, however, and the need to give the ground time to recover from the heavy rains of August rendered a considerable interval unavoidable before a new advance could be undertaken. The 20th September was therefore chosen for the date of our attack, and before that day our preparations had been completed.

The front selected extended from the Ypres-Comines Canal north of Hollebeke to the Ypres-Staden Railway north of Langemarck, a distance of just over eight miles along the line then held by us. The average depth of our objectives was 1,000 yards, which increased to a depth of a mile in the neighbourhood of the Menin Road. Australian, English, Scottish, and South African troops were employed in the attack, and gained a success conspicuous for precision and thoroughness of execution.

The Menin Road Ridge.

(50) During the night of the 19th-20th September rain again fell steadily, and when dawn broke thick mist made observation impossible. Despite this disadvantage, the assembling of our troops was carried out in good order, and at 5.40 a.m. on the 20th September the assault was launched.

Good progress was made from the start, and as the morning wore on the mist cleared. Our aeroplanes were able to establish contact with our infantry, to assist them by engaging parties of the enemy with machine-gun fire, and to report hostile concentrations and counter-attacks to our artillery.

On our right Welsh and west country troops advanced down the spur east of Klein Zillebeke, and after sharp fighting in the small woods north of the Ypres-Comines Canal gained the whole of their objectives. English battalions pushed through the eastern portions of Shrewsbury Forest and reached their objectives in the valley of the Bassevillebeek. Regiments from the south-east counties of England had some trouble from snipers and machine guns early in their advance, but ultimately fought their way forward across the upper valley of the Bassevillebeek and up the slopes of Tower Hamlets. Here strong opposition was encountered, with heavy machine-gun fire from Tower Hamlets and the Veldhoek Ridge.

In the meantime, however, north country troops had

already carried Inverness Copse, and after beating off a counter-attack in the neighbourhood of Dumbarton Lakes, captured Veldhoek and the line of their final objectives some 500 yards farther east. Their progress assisted the south-east county battalions on their right to establish themselves across the Tower Hamlets Spur.

On the left of the north country division Australian troops carried the remainder of Glencorse Wood and Nonne Boschen. Before 10 a.m. they had taken the hamlet of Polygonveld and the old German third line to the north of it. This advance constituted a fine performance, in which the capture of a difficult piece of ground that had much delayed us was successfully completed. Sharp fighting took place at a strong point known as Black Watch Corner at the south-western end of Polygon Wood. By midday this had been captured, the western portion of Polygon Wood had been cleared of the enemy, and the whole of our objectives on this part of our front had been gained.

On the Fifth Army front our attack met with equal success. Scottish and South African troops, advancing on both sides of the Ypres-Roulers Railway, stormed the line of fortified farms immediately in front of their position, and, pressing on, captured Zonnebeke and Bremen Redoubts and the hamlet of Zevenkote. By 8.45 a.m. our final objectives on this front had been gained.

West Lancashire Territorial battalions found the ground south-east of St. Julien very wet and heavy after the night's rain. None the less, they made steady progress, reaching the line of their final objectives early in the afternoon. North of the Zonnebeke-Langemarck Road London and Highland Territorials gained the whole of their objectives by midday, though stiff fighting took place for a number of farms and strong places.

As the result of this most successful operation the whole of the high ground crossed by the Menin Road, for which such desperate fighting had taken place during our previous attacks,

passed into our possession. Important positions were won also on the remainder of our front, by which the right of our attack was rendered more secure, and the way opened for the advance of our left. In the attack, as well as in the repeated counter-attacks which followed, exceedingly heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy, and 3,243 prisoners, together with a number of guns, were captured by us.

Counter-Attacks.

(51) The enemy did not abandon these important positions without further severe struggles. During the afternoon and evening of the 20th September no less than eleven counter-attacks were made, without success, against different parts of our new front, in addition to several concentrations of hostile infantry, which were broken up by our artillery before any attack could be launched.

East of St. Julien the enemy at his third attempt succeeded in forcing back our troops to the west of Schuler Farm, but on the following day the farm was retaken by us and our line re-established. North-east of Langemarck stubborn fighting took place for the possession of the short length of trench which, as already recounted, had resisted our attacks on the 16th August. It was not till the morning of the 23rd September that the position was finally captured by us.

Fierce fighting took place also on the 21st September, in the neighbourhood of Tower Hamlets. In the course of this and the following four days three powerful attacks were launched by the enemy on wide fronts between Tower Hamlets and Polygon Wood, and a fourth north-east of St. Julien. All these attacks were repulsed, except that on the 25th September parties of German infantry succeeded in entering our lines north of the Menin Road. Heavy and confused fighting took place in this area throughout the day, in which English, Scottish, and Australian troops gradually drove the enemy from the limited foothold he had gained.

The enemy's casualties in these many counter-attacks, as well as in all those subsequently delivered by him on the Ypres front, were consistently very heavy. Our constant successful resistance reflects the greatest credit on the high fighting qualities of our infantry, on the courage and devotion of our airmen, and upon the excellence of our artillery arrangements.

Polygon Wood and Zonnebeke.

(52) All this heavy fighting was not allowed to interfere with the arrangements made for a renewal of the advance by the Second and Fifth Armies on the 26th September.

The front of our attack on that date extended from south of Tower Hamlets to north-east of St. Julien, a total distance of rather less than six miles ; but on the portion of this front south of the Menin Road only a short advance was intended. North of the Menin Road, our object was to reach a position from which a direct attack could be made upon the portion of the main ridge between Noordemdhoek and Broodseinde, traversed by the Becelaere-Passchendaele Road.

The assault was delivered at 5.50 a.m., and after hard and prolonged fighting, in which over 1,600 prisoners were taken by us, achieved a success as striking as that of the 20th September.

Australian troops carried the remainder of Polygon Wood, together with the German trench line to the east of it, and established themselves on their objectives beyond the Becelaere-Zonnebeke Road. On the left of the Australians, English troops took Zonnebeke Village and church, and North Midland and London Territorial battalions captured a long line of hostile strong points on both sides of the Wieltje-Gravenstafel Road.

South of Polygon Wood an obstinate struggle took place for a group of fortified farms and strong points. English, Scottish, and Welsh battalions of the same divisions that had borne the brunt of the enemy's attacks in this area on the

previous day gallantly fought their way forward. In their advance they effected the relief of two companies of Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, who, with great courage and resolution, had held out in our forward line all night, although isolated from the rest of our troops. It was not until the evening of the 27th September, however, that the line of our objectives in this locality was completely gained.

Further Counter-Attacks.

(53) As had been the case on the 20th September, our advance was at once followed by a series of powerful counter-attacks.

There is evidence that our operations had anticipated a counterstroke which the enemy was preparing for the evening of the 26th September, and the German troops brought up for this purpose were now hurled in to recover the positions he had lost. In the course of the day at least seven attacks were delivered at points covering practically the whole front from Tower Hamlets to St. Julien. The fiercest fighting prevailed in the sector between the Reutelbeek and Polygon Wood, but here, as elsewhere, all the enemy's assaults were beaten off.

On the 30th September, when the enemy had recovered from the disorganization caused by his defeat, he recommenced his attacks. Two attempts to advance with *flammenwerfer* north of the Menin Road were followed on the 1st October by five other attacks in this area, and on the same day a sixth attack was made south of the Ypres-Roulers Railway. Except for the temporary loss of the two advanced posts south-east of Polygon Wood, all these attacks were repulsed with great loss. At dawn on the 3rd October another attempt in the neighbourhood of the Menin Road broke down before our positions.

A Further Advance on the Main Ridge.—Broodseinde.

(54) The spell of fine weather was broken on the evening of the 3rd October by a heavy gale and rain from the south-west. These conditions serve to emphasize the credit due to the troops for the completeness of the success gained by them on the following day.

At 6 a.m. on the 4th October our advance was renewed, in accordance with plan, against the main line of the ridge east of Zonnebeke. The front of our principal attack extended from the Menin Road to the Ypres-Staden Railway, a distance of about seven miles. South of the Menin Road a short advance was undertaken on a front of about a mile, with the object of capturing certain strong points required to strengthen our position in this sector.

The attack was carried out by Australian, New Zealand, and English divisions, including among the latter a few Scottish, Irish, and Welsh battalions, and was successful at all points.

On the right of the main attack troops from Kent, Devon, and Cornwall, and a battalion of the King's Own Scottish Borderers carried their objectives after heavy fighting in the neighbourhood of Polderhoek Château. Battalions from Yorkshire, Northumberland, Surrey, and Lincolnshire cleared the small enclosures east of Polygon Wood and seized the village of Reutel, meeting with strong opposition. On their left Surrey, Staffordshire, Devon, Border, and Highland troops, advancing across the crest of the ridge, captured the hamlet of Noordemdhoek.

Farther north, Australian troops advanced beyond the Becelaere-Passchendaele Road, storming Molenaarelshoek and Broodseinde, and established themselves well to the east of the crest line. New Zealand troops carried Gravenstafel, and drove the enemy from a network of trenches and strong points on the Gravenstafel Spur.

On the whole of this front the enemy was met in great

strength. In addition to the two German divisions already in line, the enemy had brought up three fresh divisions, with a view to launching an attack in force upon the positions captured by us on the 26th September. Our advance anticipated this attack by ten minutes, and the German infantry were forming up for the assault when our artillery barrage opened. Very serious casualties were inflicted on the enemy by our artillery, and our infantry advancing with the bayonet quickly overcame the resistance of those of his troops who had escaped our shell fire. Great numbers of prisoners were taken.

On the left of our attack South Midland troops forced their way across the valley of the Stroombeek, in spite of difficulties due to the rain of the previous night, and gained their objectives according to programme, with the exception of a single strong point at the limit of their advance. Other English divisions, advancing on both sides of the Poelcappelle Road, stormed the western half of that village, including the church, and captured the whole of their objectives for the day. Tanks took part in the attack on Poelcappelle, and contributed to the success of our troops.

On the extreme left considerable opposition was met with, and determined fighting took place for the possession of the rising ground known as 19 Metre Hill. Early in the afternoon a hostile counter-attack forced us back from a portion of this position, but later in the day our troops returned to the attack, and recovered the lost ground.

Meanwhile, south of the Menin Road, English troops had gained the whole of their limited objectives with the exception of two strong points. Soon after midday our final objectives had been gained, and large numbers of prisoners had already been brought in. The final total of German prisoners captured in these operations exceeded 5,000, including 138 officers. A few guns and many machine guns and trench mortars were also taken by us.

The destruction of the divisions which the enemy had

assembled for his intended attack made immediate serious counter-attacks impossible for him on a great part of our front. Between the Menin Road and the neighbourhood of Reutel, however, no less than seven counter-attacks were beaten off in turn. Exceedingly heavy fighting took place in this area, and later in the day an eighth attack succeeded in dislodging us from Polderhoek Château and from the eastern portions of Reutel. Another determined counter-attack, delivered in three waves early in the afternoon north of the Ypres-Roulers Railway, was broken up by our artillery, rifle, and machine-gun fire. Hostile concentrations east of Zonnebeke and west of Passchendaele were dispersed by our artillery.

Results of this Attack.

(55) The success of this operation marked a definite step in the development of our advance. Our line had now been established along the main ridge for 9,000 yards from our starting-point near Mount Sorrel. From the farthest point reached the well-marked Gravenstafel Spur offered a defensible feature along which our line could be bent back from the ridge.

The year was far spent. The weather had been consistently unpropitious, and the state of the ground, in consequence of rain and shelling combined, made movement inconceivably difficult. The resultant delays had given the enemy time to bring up reinforcements and to organize his defence after each defeat. Even so, it was still the difficulty of movement far more than hostile resistance which continued to limit our progress, and now made it doubtful whether the capture of the remainder of the ridge before winter finally set in was possible.

On the other hand, there was no reason to anticipate an abnormally wet October. The enemy had suffered severely, as was evidenced by the number of prisoners in our hands, by the number of his dead on the battlefield, by the costly

failure of his repeated counter-attacks, and by the symptoms of confusion and discouragement in his ranks.

In this connection, documents captured in the course of the battle of the 4th October throw an interesting light upon the success of the measures taken by us to meet the enemy's new system of defence by counter-attack. These documents show that the German Higher Command had already recognized the failure of their methods, and were endeavouring to revert to something approximating to their old practice of holding their forward positions in strength.

After weighing these considerations, as well as the general situation and various other factors affecting the problem, among them the desirability of assisting our Allies in the operations to be carried out by them on the 23rd October in the neighbourhood of Malmaison, I decided to continue the offensive further, and to renew the advance at the earliest possible moment consistent with adequate preparation.

Accordingly, I determined to deliver the next combined French and British attack on the 9th October.

Houthulst Forest reached.

(56) Unfortunately, bad weather still persisted in the early part of October, and on the 7th October heavy rain fell all day. The unfavourable conditions interfered with our artillery preparations; but every effort was made to engage the enemy's batteries in their new positions, and on the date last mentioned our artillery co-operated effectively in the repulse of two hostile attacks.

On the 8th October rain continued, and the slippery state of the ground, combined with an exceptionally dark night, made the assembling of our troops a matter of considerable difficulty. No interference, however, was encountered from the enemy's artillery, and at 5.20 a.m. on the 9th October our attack was renewed on a front of over six miles, from a point east of Zonnebeke to our junction with the French

north-west of Langemarck. On our left our Allies prolonged the front of attack to a point opposite Draafbank. At the same time, minor operations were undertaken on the right of our main attack, east and south-east of Polygon Wood.

The greatest depth of our advance was on the left, where the Allied troops penetrated the German positions to a distance of nearly one and a half miles. French troops and British Guards crossed the flooded valley of the Broenbeek, and making steady progress towards their objectives, captured the hamlet of Koekuit, Veldhoek, Mangelare, and St. Janshoek, besides woods and a great number of farmhouses and strong points. Early in the afternoon both French and British troops had established themselves on their final objectives, on the outskirts of Houthulst Forest.

On the right of the Guards, other English divisions made equal progress along the Ypres-Staden Railway, and secured a line well to the east of the Poelcappelle-Houthulst Road. Stiff fighting took place around certain strong points, in the course of which a hostile counter-attack was repulsed.

Farther south, English battalions fought their way forward, in the face of great opposition, to the eastern outskirts of Poelcappelle village. Australian troops and East Lancashire, Yorkshire, and South Midland Territorials carried our line forward in the direction of Passchendaele and up the western slopes of the main ridge, capturing Nieuwemolen and Keerselaarhoek and a number of strong points and fortified farms.

In the subsidiary attack east of Polygon Wood Warwickshire and H.A.C. battalions successfully regained the remainder of Reutel.

Over 2,100 prisoners were taken by the Allies in the course of these operations, together with a few guns.

Progress continued.

(57) Though the condition of the ground continued to deteriorate, the weather after this was unsettled rather than

persistently wet, and progress had not yet become impossible. I accordingly decided to press on while circumstances still permitted, and arrangements were made for a renewal of the attack on the 12th October. On the night of the 11th-12th October, however, heavy rain commenced again, and after a brief interval during the morning continued steadily throughout the whole of the following day.

Our attack, launched at 5.25 a.m. on the 12th October between the Ypres-Roulers Railway and Houthulst Forest, made progress along the spurs and higher ground; but the valleys of the streams which run westward from the main ridge were found to be impassable. It was therefore determined not to persist in the attack, and the advance towards our more distant objectives was cancelled.

Certain strong points and fortified farms on the western slopes of the ridge were captured on this day, and were incorporated in our line. Farther north, on both sides of the Ypres-Staden Railway, English county divisions and the Guards gained their objectives in spite of all difficulties. Though for many hours the position of our advanced troops on this part of our front was uncertain, communication was at length established and the captured ground maintained.

Over 1,000 prisoners were taken by us in this attack, in which the troops employed displayed remarkable gallantry, steadfastness, and endurance in circumstances of extreme hardship.

Plan of Subsequent Operations.

(58) By this time the persistent continuation of wet weather had left no further room for hope that the condition of the ground would improve sufficiently to enable us to capture the remainder of the ridge this year. By limited attacks made during intervals of better weather, however, it would still be possible to progress as far as Passchendaele, and in view of other projects which I had in view it was desirable to maintain pressure on the Flanders front for a few weeks longer.

To maintain his defence on this front the enemy had been obliged to reduce the garrison of certain other parts of his line to a degree which justified the expectation that a sudden attack at a point where he did not expect it might attain a considerable local success. The front for such an attempt had been selected and plans had already been quietly made. But certain preparations and movements of troops required time to complete, and the 20th November had been fixed as the earliest date for the attack.

No large force could be made available for the enterprise. The prospects of success therefore depended on complete secrecy and on maintaining sufficient activity in Flanders to induce the enemy to continue his concentration of troops in that theatre.

As has been indicated above, our Allies also had certain limited operations in view which would be likely to benefit by the maintenance of pressure on my front, and, reciprocally, would add to the prospects of success of my intended surprise attack. Accordingly, while preparing for the latter, operations of limited scope were continued in Flanders.

The Merckem Peninsula.

(59) After the middle of October the weather improved, and on the 22nd October two successful operations, in which we captured over 200 prisoners and gained positions of considerable local importance east of Poelcappelle and within the southern edge of Houthulst Forest, were undertaken by us, in the one case by East County and Northumberland troops, and in the other by West County and Scots battalions in co-operation with the French.

The following two days were unsettled, but on the 25th October a strong west wind somewhat dried the surface of the ground. It was therefore decided to proceed with the Allied operations which had been planned for the 26th October.

At an early hour on that morning rain unfortunately

began again and fell heavily all day. The assembling of our troops was completed successfully none the less, and at 5.45 a.m. English and Canadian troops attacked on a front extending from the Ypres-Roulers Railway to beyond Poelcappelle.

The Canadians attacked on the right on both sides of the small stream known as the Ravebeek, which flows south-westwards from Passchendaele. On the left bank of the stream they advanced astride the main ridge and established themselves securely on the small hill south of Passchendaele. North of the Ravebeek strong resistance was met on the Bellevue Spur, a very strong point which had resisted our efforts in previous attacks. With splendid determination the Canadians renewed their attack on this point in the afternoon, and captured it. Two strong counter-attacks south and west of Passchendaele were beaten off, and by nightfall the Canadians had gained practically the whole of their objectives.

On the left of the Canadians the Royal Naval Division and battalions of London Territorials also advanced, and, in spite of immense difficulties from marsh and floods in the more low-lying ground, made progress.

In a subsidiary attack undertaken by us at the same hour English troops entered Gheluvelt and recaptured Polderhoek Château, with a number of prisoners. Our men's rifles, however, had become choked with mud in their advance, and when later in the morning strong German counter-attacks developed, they were obliged to withdraw.

The operations of our Allies on this day were limited to establishing bridgeheads across the floods of the St. Jansbeek. This was successfully accomplished, in spite of considerable opposition. Next day the French continued their advance in concert with Belgian troops, who crossed the Yser opposite Knockehoek, and captured Aschhoop, Kippe, and Merckem. The southern end of Blankaart Lake was reached on the same day, and early on the 28th October French and Belgian troops completed the capture of the whole Merckem peninsula.

Over 400 prisoners were taken by our Allies in these operations, bringing the total Allied captures since the commencement of our attacks on the 26th October to over 1,200.

Passchendaele.

(60) At this date the need for the policy of activity outlined above had been still further emphasized by recent developments in Italy. Additional importance was given to it by the increasing probability that a time was approaching when the enemy's power of drawing reinforcements from Russia would increase considerably. In pursuance of this policy, therefore, two short advances were made on the 30th October and the 6th November, by which we gained possession of Passchendaele.

In the first operation Canadian and English troops attacked at 5.50 a.m. on a front extending from the Ypres-Roulers Railway to the Poelcappelle-Westroosebeke Road.

On the right the Canadians continued their advance along the high ground and reached the outskirts of Passchendaele, capturing an important position at Crest Farm on a small hill south-west of the village. Fighting was severe at all points, but particularly on the spur west of Passchendaele. Here no less than five strong counter-attacks were beaten off in the course of the day, our troops being greatly assisted by the fire of captured German machine guns in Crest Farm.

Farther north, battalions of the same London and Naval Divisions that had taken part in the attack on the 26th October again made progress wherever it was possible to find a way across the swamps. The almost impassable nature of the ground in this area, however, made movement practically impossible, and it was only on the main ridge that much could be effected.

During the succeeding days small advances were made by night south-west of Passchendaele, and a hostile attack on both sides of the Ypres-Roulers Railway was successfully repulsed.

At 6 a.m. on the 6th November Canadian troops renewed their attack and captured the village of Passchendaele, together with the high ground immediately to the north and north-west. Sharp fighting took place for the possession of "pill-boxes" in the northern end of the village, around Mosselmarkt, and on the Goudberg Spur. All objectives were gained at an early hour, and at 8.50 a.m. a hostile counter-attack north of Passchendaele was beaten off.

Over 400 prisoners were captured in this most successful attack, by which for the second time within the year Canadian troops achieved a record of uninterrupted success. Four days later, in extremely unfavourable weather, British and Canadian troops attacked northwards from Passchendaele and Goudberg, and captured further ground on the main ridge, after heavy fighting.

General Review.

(61) These operations concluded our Flanders offensive for the time being, although considerable activity was still continued for another fortnight for purposes already explained.

This offensive, maintained for three and a half months under the most adverse conditions of weather, had entailed almost superhuman exertions on the part of the troops of all arms and services. The enemy had done his utmost to hold his ground, and in his endeavours to do so had used up no less than seventy-eight divisions, of which eighteen had been engaged a second or third time in the battle, after being withdrawn to rest and refit. Despite the magnitude of his efforts, it was the immense natural difficulties, accentuated manifold by the abnormally wet weather, rather than the enemy's resistance, which limited our progress and prevented the complete capture of the ridge.

What was actually accomplished under such adverse conditions is the most conclusive proof that, given a normally fine August, the capture of the whole ridge, within the space of a few weeks, was well within the power of the men who

achieved so much. They advanced every time with absolute confidence in their power to overcome the enemy, even though they had sometimes to struggle through mud up to their waists to reach him. So long as they could reach him they did overcome him, but physical exhaustion placed narrow limits on the depth to which each advance could be pushed, and compelled long pauses between the advances. The full fruits of each success were consequently not always obtained. Time after time the practically beaten enemy was enabled to reorganize and relieve his men and to bring up reinforcements behind the sea of mud which constituted his main protection.

Notwithstanding the many difficulties, much has been achieved. Our captures in Flanders since the commencement of operations at the end of July amount to 24,065 prisoners, 74 guns, 941 machine guns and 138 trench mortars. It is certain that the enemy's losses considerably exceeded ours. Most important of all, our new and hastily trained armies have shown once again that they are capable of meeting and beating the enemy's best troops, even under conditions which favoured his defence to a degree which it required the greatest endurance, determination and heroism to overcome.

In this respect I desire once more to lay emphasis upon the supreme importance of adequate training prior to placing troops in the line of battle, whether for offence or defence. It is essential, if preventable sacrifice is to be avoided and success assured, that troops that are going into battle should first be given an opportunity for special training, under the officers who are to command them in the fight, for the task which they are to be called upon to perform.

Owing to the necessity, already referred to, of taking over line from the French, our offensive at the beginning of the year was commenced under a very definite handicap in this respect. This initial disadvantage was subsequently increased by the difficulty of obtaining adequate drafts a sufficient length of time before divisions were called upon to take their

place in the battle, to enable the drafts to be assimilated into divisions and divisions to be trained.

The general conditions of the struggle this year have been very different from those contemplated at the conference of the Allied Commanders held in November 1916. The great general and simultaneous offensive then agreed on did not materialize. Russia, though some of her leaders made a fine effort at one period, not only failed to give the help expected of her, but even failed to prevent the enemy from transferring some forty fresh divisions from her front in exchange for tired ones used up in the Western theatre, or from replacing losses in his divisions on this side by drafts of fresh and well-trained men drawn from divisions in the East.

The combined French and British offensive in the spring was launched before Italy could be ready ; and the splendid effort made by Italy at a later period was, unfortunately, followed by developments which resulted in a weakening of the Allied forces in this theatre before the conclusion of our offensive.

In these circumstances the task of the British and French Armies has been a far heavier one throughout the year than was originally anticipated, and the enemy's means of meeting our attack have been far greater than either he or we could have expected.

That under such conditions the victories of Arras, Vimy, Messines and Flanders were won by us, and those at Moronvilliers, Verdun and Malmaison by the French, constitute a record of which the Allied Armies, working in close touch throughout, have a right to be proud.

The British Armies have taken their full share in the fighting on the Western front. Save for such short intervals as were enforced by the weather or rendered necessary for the completion of the preparations for our principal attacks, they have maintained a vigorous and continuous offensive throughout practically the whole of the period covered by this Dispatch. No other example of offensive action on so large

a scale, so long and so successfully sustained, has yet been furnished by the war.

In the operations of Arras, Messines, Lens and Ypres as many as 131 German divisions have been engaged and defeated by less than half that number of British divisions.

The number of prisoners and guns captured by us is an indication of the progress we have made. The total number of prisoners taken between the opening of our spring offensive on the 9th April 1917 and the conclusion of the Flanders offensive, exclusive of prisoners captured in the Cambrai Battle, is 57,696, including 1,290 officers. During the same period and in the same offensives we have also captured 393 guns, including 109 heavy guns, 561 trench mortars and 1,976 machine guns.

Without reckoning, therefore, the possibilities which have been opened up by our territorial gains in Flanders, and without considering the effect which a less vigorous prosecution of the war by us might have had in other theatres, we have every reason to be satisfied with the results which have been achieved by the past year's fighting. The addition of strength which the enemy has obtained, or may yet obtain, from events in Russia and Italy has already largely been discounted, and the ultimate destruction of the enemy's field forces has been brought appreciably nearer.

The Defensive Fronts.

(62) Before passing from the subject of the operations of the past eight months, tribute must be paid to the work accomplished on the defensive portions of our line.

In order to meet the urgent demands of battle, the number of divisions in line on other fronts has necessarily been reduced to the minimum consistent with safety. In consequence, constant vigilance and heavy and unrelenting labour have been required at all times of the troops holding these fronts.

The numerous feint attacks which have been organized from time to time have called for great care, forethought and ingenuity on the part of Commanders and Staffs concerned, and have demanded much courageous, skilful and arduous work from the troops entrusted with the task of carrying them out. In addition, raids and local operations have continued to form a prominent feature of our general policy on our defensive front, and have been effectively combined with our feint attacks and with gas discharges. In the course of the 270 successful raids carried out by us during the period covered by this Dispatch, the greatest enterprise and skill have been displayed by our troops, and many hundreds of prisoners, together with much invaluable information, have been obtained at comparatively light cost.

Our Troops.

(63) In my Dispatch dealing with the Somme Battle I endeavoured to express something of the profound admiration inspired in me by the indomitable courage, tireless energy and cheerful endurance of the men by whose efforts the British Armies in France were brought triumphantly through that mighty ordeal. To-day the Armies of the Empire can look back with yet greater pride upon still severer tests successfully withstood and an even higher record of accomplishment.

No one acquainted with the facts can review the general course of the campaigns of 1916 and 1917 without acquiring the sense of a steady progression, in which the fighting superiority of the British soldier has been asserted with ever-increasing insistence. This feeling permeates the troops themselves, and is the greatest guarantee of victory.

Infantry.

Throughout the northern operations our troops have been fighting over ground every foot of which is sacred to the

memory of those who, in the first and second battles of Ypres, fought and died to make possible the victories of the armies which to-day are rolling back the tide stayed by their sacrifice. It is no disparagement of the gallant deeds performed on other fronts to say that, in the stubborn struggle for the line of hills which stretches from Wytschaete to Passchendaele, the great armies that to-day are shouldering the burden of our Empire have shown themselves worthy of the regiments which, in October and November of 1914, made Ypres take rank for ever amongst the most glorious of British battles.

Throughout the months of strenuous fighting which have wiped the old Ypres salient from the battle map of Flanders, the finest qualities of our infantry have been displayed. The great material disadvantages of the position from which they had to attack, the strength of the enemy's fortifications, and the extraordinary hardships imposed by the conditions of ground and weather during August and throughout the later stages of the attack, called for the exercise of courage, determination and endurance to a degree which has never been surpassed in war.

Artillery.

The courage of our infantry would have been in vain but for the skill, steadfastness and devotion of the artillery. Their task in the Ypres Battle was again a peculiarly hard one. The long preparatory bombardments had to be conducted from a narrow and confined space, for the most part destitute alike of cover and protection, and directly overlooked by the enemy.

As our infantry advanced, our guns had to follow, at the cost of almost incredible exertion, over ground torn by shell fire and sodden with rain. When at length the new positions had been reached, our batteries had to remain in action, practically without protection of any kind, day after day, week after week, and even month after month, under a continuous bombardment of gas and high explosive shell.

It would be easy to multiply instances of individual heroism, to quote cases where, when the signal from our infantry for urgent artillery support and the warning of German gas have been given at the same moment, our gunners have thrown aside their half-adjusted gas masks and, with full knowledge of the consequences, have fought their guns in response to the call of the infantry till the enemy's attack has been beaten off.

A single incident which occurred during the preparation for the attack of the 31st July may be taken as a general example. A howitzer battery had received orders to cut a section of German wire in the neighbourhood of Hooze, and 400 rounds had been allocated for the purpose. The battery, situated in an unavoidably exposed position in the neighbourhood of Zillebeke Lake, had already been subjected to constant shelling. On the occasion referred to, not more than 50 rounds had been fired at the German wire, when a hostile 15 cm. battery opened a steady and accurate fire in enfilade. Each time the British battery opened, salvos of 15 cm. shells raked its position. Four of its six guns were put out of action, and two ammunition dumps were blown up, but the remaining two guns continued in action until the last of the 400 rounds had been fired. A few days later, when our infantry advanced over the sector this battery had shelled, the enemy's wire was found to have been completely cut.

The debt owed to the artillery throughout the whole of this year's fighting, and particularly in the Ypres Battle, is very great. Despite the extraordinary strain to which the gunners have been subjected, yet, wherever conditions of weather and light have made accurate shooting possible, they have never failed to dominate the German batteries. As the result of their close and loyal co-operation through long periods of continuous fighting, hostile artillery has never succeeded in stopping our attacks. Our infantry would be the first to acknowledge their admirable devotion and self-sacrifice.

Royal Flying Corps.

During the past year the part played by the Royal Flying Corps in modern battles has grown more and more important. Each successive attack has served to demonstrate with increasing clearness the paramount necessity for the closest co-operation between air and land arms. All must work together on a general plan towards our end—the defeat of the enemy's forces.

In accordance with this governing consideration, co-operation with artillery, photography, and reconnaissance have been greatly developed and actively continued. Air fighting has taken place on an ever-increasing scale in order to enable the machines engaged upon these tasks to carry out their work. In addition, a definite aerial offensive, in which long distance raiding has taken a prominent place, has become a recognized part of the preparations for infantry attack.

Throughout the progress of the battle itself low-flying aeroplanes not only maintain contact with our advancing infantry, reporting their position and signalling the earliest indications of hostile counter-attack, but themselves join directly in the attack by engaging the enemy's infantry in line and in support with machine-gun fire and bombs, by assisting our artillery to disperse hostile concentrations, and by spreading confusion among the enemy's transport, reinforcements and batteries.

In answer to the concentrations of hostile machines on our front and the strenuous efforts made by the enemy to reassert himself in the air, the bombing of German aerodromes has been intensified, and has been carried out at great distances behind the enemy's lines. In more than one instance the enemy has been compelled to abandon particular aerodromes altogether as the result of our constant raids.

Besides his aerodromes the enemy's railway stations and communications, his dumps and billets have also been attacked with increasing frequency and with most successful results.

The persistent raiding by hostile aeroplanes and airships of English cities and towns, and the enemy's open disregard of the losses thereby caused to civilian life and property, have recently decided our own Government to adopt counter measures. In consequence of this decision a series of bombing raids into Germany were commenced in October 1917, and have since been continued whenever weather conditions have permitted.

In the discharge of duties, constantly increasing in number and importance, the Royal Flying Corps throughout the whole of the past year have shown the same magnificent offensive spirit which characterized its work during the Somme Battle, combined with unsurpassed technical knowledge and practical skill.

The enemy, however, shows no sign of relaxing his endeavours in this department of war. While acknowledging, therefore, most fully the great effort that has been made to meet the ever-increasing demands of this most important service, I feel it my duty to point out once more that the position which has been won by the skill, courage and devotion of our pilots can only be maintained by a liberal supply of the most efficient machines.

Before passing from the artillery and air services I wish to refer to the increasingly efficient work of the Anti-Aircraft and Searchlight Sections in France. The growing activity of the enemy's bombing squadrons has thrown a corresponding strain on these units. They have responded to the call with considerable success, and the frequency with which hostile aircraft are brought down by our ground defences shows a satisfactory tendency to increase.

Cavalry.

During the first days of the Battle of Arras the depth of our advance enabled a limited use to be made of bodies of mounted troops. The cavalry showed much promptness and

resource in utilizing such opportunities as were offered them, and at Monchy-le-Preux, in particular, performed most valuable service in support of and in co-operation with the infantry.

Special Services.

The gradual development of modern warfare during the past year has shown a very definite tendency to emphasize the importance of the various Special Services, while at the same time bringing their employment into closer co-ordination with the work of the principal arms.

Tanks.

Although throughout the major part of the Ypres Battle, and especially in its latter stages, the condition of the ground made the use of tanks difficult or impossible, yet whenever circumstances were in any way favourable, and even when they were not, very gallant and valuable work has been accomplished by tank commanders and crews on a great number of occasions. Long before the conclusion of the Flanders offensive these new instruments had proved their worth and amply justified the labour, material and personnel diverted to their construction and development.

In the course of the various operations in which tanks have taken part, at Arras, Messines and Ypres, officers and men have given frequent examples of high and self-sacrificing courage as well as strong esprit-de-corps.

Trench Mortars.

Trench mortars have continued to play an important part in supplementing the work of our artillery in trench warfare, and have also been used most effectively in the preliminary stages of our offensives. The personnel concerned have shown great skill and enterprise in obtaining the best results from the various types of mortars.

Machine-Gun Corps.

During the past year the use of the machine gun in offensive warfare has been considerably extended. The machine-gun barrage has taken a definite place with the artillery barrage in covering the advance of our infantry, while the lighter forms of machine guns have proved of great assistance in the capture of hostile strong points. In these directions, as well as in the repulse of hostile counter-attacks, great boldness and skill have been shown, and very valuable work has been done by all ranks of the machine-gun corps.

Royal Engineers.

The prolonged period of active fighting and the vast amount of work involved by our different offensives have thrown a peculiarly heavy burden on the Royal Engineers, both preparatory to and during operations.

The Field, Signal, Army Troops, and Tramway Companies, together with Pioneer and Labour Battalions, from home and overseas, have played an increasingly important part, not only in the preparation for our offensives, but also during the latter stages of the battles. The courage and enduring self-sacrifice displayed by all ranks, whether in the organization of captured positions or in the maintenance of forward communications under heavy shell fire, are deserving of the highest praise.

The Tunnelling Companies have maintained their superiority over the enemy underground, and the important tactical success achieved by the Messines mines is a sufficient testimony of their untiring efforts. They have taken a large share in the construction of dug-outs and road-making during operations, and have worked with great courage and cheerfulness under conditions of much hardship and danger.

The successful manner in which the difficult problem of water supply during operations was overcome reflects great credit upon the Royal Engineers. My thanks are also due

to the War Office Staff concerned, and the manufacturers and their employees, for the special efforts made by them to meet the demands of the Army in respect of the necessary machinery and plant.

The other Engineer units, both in forward areas and on the lines of communication, have discharged their various special duties with an equal skill and perseverance. The increased demand for accommodation, hospitals and workshops on the lines of communication has been met with commendable promptitude, and the supply of Engineer stores and materials, now required in vast quantities, has throughout been most efficiently maintained. A notable feature also is the progress which has been made in the devices for the concealment of troops and material.

Signal Services.

The Signal Service, which at the end of the Battle of the Somme had already grown into a great and intricate organization, has had even larger demands made upon it during the past year.

Apart from the perfecting and maintenance of rear communications, special provision has had to be made for carrying our communications forward as our troops have advanced. The measures adopted to this end have been skilfully devised and admirably carried out. In many cases within a few hours of a successful operation large numbers of buried telephone circuits have been extended into the captured zone under very trying conditions; the provision of communications for artillery Forward Observation Officers, etc., proceeding simultaneously with the organization of the new line. Thanks to the rapidity with which communications in the forward areas have been established, information of hostile concentrations has frequently been transmitted by their means from the front in time to enable the artillery to break up impending counter-attacks.

The success which has attended the establishment of these forward communications has been largely due to the untiring energy and devotion to duty of the officers and men of the numerous small Signal Sections and Detachments. On them has devolved, in circumstances of great difficulty and danger, the execution of the complicated schemes of communication necessitated by the present form of warfare.

The Carrier Pigeon Service has also been greatly developed during the present year, and has proved extremely valuable for conveying information from attacking units to the headquarters of their formations.

Gas Services.

Reference has been made earlier in this Dispatch to the valuable services rendered by the Special Brigade, both on the defensive fronts and in the battle areas where large quantities of gas were successfully discharged in preparation for our different offensives. These special troops have taken an active part also in our feint attacks and in the various measures taken to harass German divisions sent by the enemy to recuperate on the quieter portions of his front. Gas discharges have become matters of almost nightly occurrence, and have been carried out with success on all portions of the front from the right of our line to the sea. In the period covered by this Dispatch a total weight of nearly 2,000 tons of gas has been liberated in the course of 335 separate discharges.

Numerous new methods and devices have been put into practice with excellent results. Many of these have entailed very heavy work and great courage and devotion on the part of the personnel employed ; but all demands have been met with unflinching cheerfulness and carried out with the greatest efficiency. Evidence of the serious casualties inflicted on the enemy by gas and kindred methods of offence continues to accumulate.

Field Survey Companies.

Special mention again deserves to be made of the Field Survey Companies, who throughout the year's operations have carried out their important functions with the utmost zeal and efficiency. With the assistance of the Ordnance Survey they have enabled an adequate supply of maps to be maintained in spite of the constant changes of the battle front. Their assistance has also been invaluable to our artillery in locating the enemy's new battery positions during the actual progress of battle.

Meteorological Section.

The Meteorological Section has kept me furnished with valuable information concerning the probable course of the weather, in spite of the limited area from which the necessary data are now procurable.

Transportation Services.

In describing the preparations for our offensives, constant reference has been made in the body of this Dispatch to the work of the Transportation Services. The year has been one of rapid expansion in all branches of the various Transportation Services, and the manner in which the calls made upon them have been met is deserving of the highest praise.

During the present year the dock capacity allotted to the British Armies in France has been thoroughly organized, and its equipment, efficiency of working and capacity greatly improved. In the first nine months of this year the number of working cranes was more than doubled, and during the year the discharging capacity of the docks has proved equal to the maximum import requirements. The rate of discharge of vessels has been accelerated by 100 per cent., and the weekly average of ship-days lost has been reduced to nearly one-fifth of its January figures.

As regards railway expansion, the number of imported broad gauge locomotives in traffic in France in October 1917 was nearly ten times as great as at the end of 1916. The number of imported broad gauge waggons in traffic shows a corresponding growth, and the necessary erecting and repairing shops for this increased rolling stock have been provided and equipped. Many hundred miles of broad gauge track have been laid, also, both in immediate connection with our offensives and for the general service of our Armies.

The result of these different measures has naturally had a most marked effect upon the traffic carrying capacity of the broad gauge railway system as a whole. The average number of trains run daily during October 1917 showed an increase of nearly 50 per cent. on the daily average for March.

Light railways have grown with a like rapidity, and the track operated at the end of October was already eight times as great as that working at the commencement of the year. During the same period the plant used in the making and upkeep of roads has been multiplied nearly seven times, rendering possible a very considerable improvement in the conditions of road transport. At the same time, the possibilities of Inland Water Transport have been further developed, resulting in October 1917 in an increase of 50 per cent. in the weekly traffic handled, as compared with the figures for January 1917.

Forestry and Quarry Units.

In the spring of 1917 the activities of the Army were extended by the formation of a Forestry Directorate, controlling Royal Engineer and Canadian Forestry Companies, to work certain forest areas in France and provide material for the use of our own and the French Armies. Quarry companies have also been formed in immediate connection with the Transportation Services.

Some idea of the magnitude of the work involved can be gained from the fact that from quarries worked in a single

locality over 600,000 tons of material were produced in the nine months ending 31st August 1917. Between March and October of this year the total weekly output of road metal received in the Army areas has nearly doubled. The average area of new and re-made roads completed weekly during October was seven and a half times greater than the weekly average for March.

By September 1917 the Army had become practically self-supporting as far as regards timber, and during the active period of working, from May to October, over three-quarters of a million tons of timber were supplied for the use of the British Army. Included in this timber was material sufficient to construct over 350 miles of plank roads and to provide sleepers for 1,500 miles of railway, besides great quantities of sawn timber for hutting and defences and many thousand tons of round timber for fascines and fuel. The bulk of the fuel wood is being obtained from woods already devastated by artillery fire.

These Forestry and Quarry units have proved of great value, and have been the source of very considerable economy. My special thanks are due to the French Forestry authorities, as well as to the Comité inter-Allié des Bois de Guerre, for their assistance in our negotiations regarding the acquisition of woods and forest areas.

Army Service Corps.

The long period of active fighting, combined with the magnitude of our operations, has once more placed a heavy strain upon the personnel of the Army Service Corps and of the Administrative Services and Departments generally. The difficulties of supply have been increased by the unavoidable congestion of the areas in which operations were taking place, as well as by the inevitable deterioration of roads and by long-distance shelling and bombing by the enemy.

In spite of all difficulties the Army Service Corps has

never failed to meet the needs of our troops in food, ammunition, material and stores of all kinds. Particularly good work has been done by the Motor Transport drivers, who have shown the greatest gallantry and devotion to duty in getting forward the requisites of the Army under heavy shell fire and during long hours of exposure.

Ordnance Corps.

The energy and zeal of the Ordnance Corps have also been admirable. The intensity of our artillery preparations and bombardments has placed the heaviest demands upon the Ordnance workshops in the repair and the overhauling of guns of all calibres. Work has been continued by day and night in order to keep our guns in action, and the unsparing efforts of officers and men have contributed in no small degree to the success of our operations.

Medical Services.

The work of the Medical Service in all its branches has continued to afford me most valuable assistance. The high standard of efficiency displayed by all ranks of the Medical Service has resulted in an almost entire freedom from epidemic disease, and has been the cause of much saving of life and limb amongst the wounded.

The devotion and gallantry of the Royal Army Medical Corps and of the Medical Corps of the Overseas Dominions during the recent operations have earned universal admiration and praise. Their work of collecting the wounded from the front has been of an exceptionally arduous nature, owing to the condition of the ground and weather. I regret that so many gallant officers and men have lost their lives in carrying out their duties.

The Medical Service of the United States of America has shared in the work of the British Medical Service, and has given very valuable help.

I am much indebted to the devotion and work of the consulting surgeons and physicians and to the Auxiliary Services of the British Red Cross Society and Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

The Nursing Services, several of whose members have unfortunately lost their lives from hostile air raids, have, as always, devoted themselves with untiring care and zeal to their work of mercy.

The excellent organization and administrative work of the Medical Services as a whole have given me entire satisfaction.

Veterinary Corps.

The work of the Army Veterinary Corps and of the Mobile Veterinary Sections has been ably carried out, and has contributed largely to the general efficiency of the Army.

The Chaplains' Department.

I take this opportunity to express, on behalf of all ranks of the British Armies in France, our great appreciation of the devotion and self-sacrifice of the Army Chaplains serving in France. No considerations of personal convenience or safety have at any time interfered with their work among the troops, the value of which is incalculable.

Army Commanders.

My thanks are again due to the Army Commanders for the complete loyalty and conspicuous ability with which they have carried out my plans during the past year. The task of launching three great offensives on different sectors of the British front, in addition to the almost constant fighting that has taken place in the neighbourhood of Lens, has demanded professional knowledge, determination and soundness of judgment of a very high order on the part of the Commanders

of the Armies concerned. It required, moreover, the most willing and unselfish co-operation between Armies, and an absolute subservience of all personal interests to the common good.

In all these respects the different Army Commanders have most completely fulfilled the high standard of character and ability required of them.

Staff.

In the heavy and responsible work which they have so admirably performed the Army Commanders have been most loyally supported and assisted by their Staff Officers and Technical Advisers, as well as by the Commanders and Staffs of the units serving under them.

My Chief of the General Staff, Lieut.-General Sir L. E. Kiggell, K.C.B., my Adjutant-General, Lieut.-General Sir G. H. Fowke, K.C.B., and my Quartermaster-General, Lieut.-General Sir R. C. Maxwell, K.C.B., as well as the other officers of my Staff and my Technical Advisers at General Headquarters and on the Lines of Communication, have given me the greatest and most valuable assistance. I am glad once more to place on record the debt that I owe to them.

The entire absence of friction or discord which characterized the work of all Services and Departments during the Somme Battle has constituted a most pleasing feature of the operations of the past year. There could be no better evidence of the singleness of purpose and determination of the Armies as a whole and no stronger guarantee of victory.

The Army's Acknowledgments.

To the Navy.

(64) The debt which the Army owes to the Navy grows ever greater as the years pass, and is deeply realized by all ranks of the British Armies in France. As the result of the unceasing vigilance of the Navy, the enemy's hope that his policy

of unrestricted submarine warfare would hamper our operations in France and Flanders has been most signally disappointed. The immense quantities of ammunition and material required by the Army, and the large numbers of men sent to us as drafts, continue to reach us with unfailing regularity.

To Home Authorities.

In this connection, I desire once more to record the obligation of the Army in the Field to the different authorities at home, both civil and military, and to the great mass of men and women in Great Britain and throughout the Empire who are working with such loyalty to enable our manifold requirements to be met.

The confidence which is felt throughout the Army that the enemy can and will be beaten is founded on the firm conviction that their own efforts in the field will be supported to the limits of their power and resources by all classes at home.

To our Allies.

At the close of another year of fighting in France and Belgium, it is a source of great gratification to me to be able to record that nothing has occurred to mar the happy relations existing between the Allied Armies, or between our troops and the civil population in France and Belgium.

The feelings of goodwill and comradeship which existed between the French and British Armies on the Somme have been continued in Flanders, where the same excellent relations have characterized the combined operations of the Belgian, French and British troops.

During the present year the Portuguese Expeditionary Force has taken its place in the line, and for many months has held a sector of the British front. Though they have not been engaged in major offensive operations, yet in a number of raids and minor engagements the officers and men of the Portuguese Expeditionary Force have shown themselves gallant and efficient soldiers.

During the present year, also, the United States of America have entered the war, and have taken up their part in it with all the well-known energy and ability of that great nation. Already many thousands of American soldiers are in France. Warm as is the welcome they have received from the French people, nowhere will they find a more genuine or a more friendly greeting than among all ranks of the other great English-speaking Armies.

I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's obedient Servant,
D. HAIG, Field Marshal,
Commanding-in-Chief,
British Armies in France.

APPENDIX II.

THE VATICAN NOTE AND PRESIDENT WILSON'S REPLY.

I.—THE VATICAN NOTE.

TO THE HEADS OF THE BELLIGERENT PEOPLES.

SINCE the beginning of our Pontificate, amid the horrors of the terrible war let loose on Europe, we have kept in mind three things above all : to maintain perfect impartiality towards all the belligerents, as becomes Him who is the common father and who loves with equal affection all His children ; to strive constantly to do to all the greatest possible good, without exception of persons, without distinction of nationality or religion, as is enjoined upon us both by the Universal Law of charity and by the supreme spiritual charge confided to us by Christ ; finally, as our pacifying mission equally requires, to omit nothing, as far as might be in our power, that could help to hasten the end of this calamity, by essaying to bring the peoples and their Heads to more moderate counsels and to the serene deliberations of peace—a peace “ just and lasting.”

Whoever has followed our work during the three sad years just elapsed has been able easily to recognize that, if we have been over-faithful to our resolve of absolute impartiality and to our beneficent action, we have never ceased to exhort the belligerent peoples and Governments to resume their brotherhood, even though all that we have done to achieve this most noble aim has not been made public,

Towards the end of the first year of war we addressed to the nations in conflict the liveliest exhortations, and pointed out, moreover, the path along which a peace, stable and honourable for all, might be attained. Unfortunately our appeal was not heeded, and the war went on desperately, with all its horrors, for another two years ; it even became more cruel, and spread, on land, on sea—nay, in the very air ; upon defenceless cities, quiet villages, and their innocent inhabitants, desolation and death were seen to fall. And now none can imagine how the sufferings of all would be increased and intensified were yet other months, or, still worse, other years, added to this bloody triennium. Shall, then, the civilized world be nought but a field of death ? And shall Europe, so glorious and flourishing, rush, as though driven by universal madness, towards the abyss, and lend her hand to her own suicide ?

In a situation so fraught with anguish, in the presence of so grave a peril, we, who have no special political aim, who heed neither the suggestions nor the interests of either of the belligerent parties, but are impelled solely by the feeling of our supreme duty as the common father of the people, by the prayers of our children, who implore from us intervention and our word of peace, by the very voice of humanity and of reason, we raise again a cry for peace, and renew a pressing appeal to those in whose hands lie the destinies of nations. But in order no longer to confine ourselves to general terms, such as were counselled by circumstances in the past, we desire now to come down to more concrete and practical proposals, and to invite the Governments of the belligerent peoples to agree upon the following points, which seem as though they ought to be the bases of a just and lasting peace, leaving to their charge the completion and the more precise definition of those points.

First, the fundamental point should be that the moral force of right should replace the material force of arms ; hence a just agreement between all for the simultaneous and

reciprocal diminution of armaments, according to rules and guarantees to be established, to the extent necessary and sufficient for the maintenance of public order in each State ; then, in the place of armies, the establishment of arbitration with its exalted pacifying function, on lines to be concerted and with sanctions to be settled against any State that should refuse either to submit international questions to arbitration or to accept its awards.

The supremacy of right once established, let every obstacle be removed from the channels of communication between peoples, by ensuring, under rules likewise to be laid down, the true freedom and common enjoyment of the seas. This would, on the one hand, remove manifold causes of conflict, and would open, on the other, fresh sources of prosperity and progress to all.

As to the reparation of damage and to the costs of war, we see no way to solve the question save by laying down as a general principle, complete and reciprocal condonation, which would, moreover, be justified by the immense benefits that would accrue from disarmament ; all the more, since the continuation of such carnage solely for economic reasons would be incomprehensible. If, in certain cases, there exist, nevertheless, special reasons, let them be weighed with justice and equity.

But these pacific agreements, with the immense advantages they entail, are impossible without the reciprocal restitution of territories now occupied. Consequently, on the part of Germany there must be the complete evacuation of Belgium, with a guarantee of her full political, military, and economic independence towards all Powers whatsoever ; likewise the evacuation of French territory. On the part of the other belligerent parties, there must be a similar restitution of the German colonies.

As regards territorial questions like those at issue between Italy and Austria, and between Germany and France, there is reason to hope that in consideration of the immense advan-

tages of a lasting peace with disarmament, the parties in conflict will examine them in a conciliatory spirit, taking account, in the measure of what is just and possible, as we have before said, of the aspirations of the peoples, and, as occasion may offer, co-ordinating particular interests with the general weal of the great human society.

The same spirit of equity and justice must reign in the study of the other territorial and political questions, notably those relating to Armenia, the Balkan States, and to the territories forming part of the ancient Kingdom of Poland, to which, in particular, its noble historical traditions and the sufferings endured, especially during the present war, ought justly to assure the sympathies of nations.

Such are the principal bases upon which we believe the future reorganization of peoples should be founded. They are such as to render impossible a return of similar conflicts, and to prepare the solution of the economic question, so important for the future and the material welfare of all the belligerent States. Therefore, in laying them before you, who guide at this tragic hour the destinies of the belligerent nations, we are inspired by a sweet hope—the hope of seeing them accepted, and thus of seeing ended at the earliest moment the terrible struggle that appears increasingly a useless massacre. Every one recognizes, moreover, that, on the one side and on the other, the honour of arms is safe. Lend, therefore, your ear to our prayer, accept the paternal invitation that we address to you in the name of the Divine Redeemer, the Prince of Peace. Think of your very heavy responsibility before God and men ; upon your resolves depend the repose and the joy of innumerable families, the life of thousands of youths, in a word, the happiness of the peoples to whom it is your absolute duty to assure these boons. May the Lord inspire in you decisions in accord with His most holy will. May Heaven grant that, in deserving the plaudits of your contemporaries, you will gain also for yourselves the name of peacemakers among future generations.

As for us, closely united in prayer and penitence with all faithful souls who sigh for peace, we pray that the Divine Spirit grant you light and counsel,

From the Vatican, August 1, 1917.

BENEDICTUS XVI.

II.—PRESIDENT WILSON'S REPLY.

In acknowledging the communication of his Holiness the Pope to the belligerent peoples, the President of the United States has requested the Secretary of State to make the following reply :—

Every heart that has not been blinded and hardened by this terrible war must be touched by this moving appeal of his Holiness the Pope, must feel the dignity and force of the humane and generous motives which prompted it, and must fervently wish that we might take the path of peace he so persuasively points out. But it would be folly to take it if it does not in fact lead to the goal he proposes. Our response must be based upon the stern facts and upon nothing else ; it is not a mere cessation of arms he desires ; it is a stable and enduring peace. This agony must not be gone through with again, and it must be a matter of very sober judgment what will insure us against it.

His Holiness in substance proposes that we return to the *status quo ante bellum*, and that then there can be a general condonation, disarmament, and a concert of nations based upon an acceptance of the principle of arbitration ; that by a similar concert freedom of the seas be established ; and that the territorial claims of France and Italy, the perplexing problems of the Balkan States, and the restitution of Poland be left to such conciliatory adjustments as may be possible in the new temper of such a peace, due regard being paid to the aspirations of the peoples whose political fortunes and affiliations will be involved.

It is manifest that no part of this programme can be successfully carried out unless the restitution of the *status quo ante* furnishes a firm and satisfactory basis for it. The object of this war is to deliver the free peoples of the world from the menace and the actual power of a vast military establishment controlled by an irresponsible Government which, having secretly planned to dominate the world, proceeded to carry the plan out without regard either to the sacred obligations of treaty or the long-established practices and long-cherished principles of international action and honour ; which chose its own time for the war ; delivered its blow fiercely and suddenly ; stopped at no barrier either of law or of mercy ; swept a whole continent within the tide of blood, not the blood of soldiers only, but the blood of innocent women and children also and of the helpless poor ; and now stands balked but not defeated, the enemy of four-fifths of the world. This power is not the German people. It is the ruthless master of the German people. It is no business of ours how that great people came under its control or submitted to its temporary zest, to the domination of its purpose ; but it is our business to see to it that the history of the rest of the world is no longer left to its handling.

To deal with such a power by way of peace upon the plan proposed by his Holiness the Pope would, so far as we can see, involve a recuperation of the strength and renewal of the policy ; would make it necessary to create a permanent hostile combination of the nations against the German people, who are its instruments ; would result in abandoning the new-born Russia to the intrigue, the manifold subtle interference, and the certain counter-revolution, which would be attempted by all the malign influences to which the German Government has of late accustomed the world. Can peace be based upon a restitution of its power or upon any word of honour it could pledge in a treaty of settlement and accommodation ?

Responsible statesmen must now everywhere see, if they never saw before, that no peace can rest securely upon polit-

ical or economic restrictions meant to benefit some nations and cripple or embarrass others, upon vindictive action of any sort, or any kind of revenge or deliberate injury. The American people have suffered intolerable wrongs at the hands of the Imperial German Government, but they desire no reprisal upon the German people, who have themselves suffered all things in this war which they did not choose. They believe that peace should rest upon the rights of peoples, not the rights of Governments, the rights of peoples, great or small, weak or powerful, their equal right to freedom and security and self-government, and to a participation upon fair terms in the economic opportunities of the world, the German peoples, of course, included, if they will accept equality and not seek domination.

The test, therefore, of every plan of peace is this: Is it based upon the faith of all the peoples involved or merely upon the word of an ambitious and intriguing Government on the one hand and of a group of free peoples on the other? This is a test which goes to the root of the matter; and it is the test which must be applied.

The purposes of the United States in this war are known to the whole world—to every people to whom the truth has been permitted to come. They do not need to be stated again. We seek no material advantage of any kind. We believe that the intolerable wrongs done in this war by the furious and brutal power of the Imperial German Government ought to be repaired, but not at the expense of the sovereignty of any people—rather in vindication of the sovereignty both of those that are weak and of those that are strong. Punitive damages, the dismemberment of empires, the establishment of selfish and exclusive economic leagues, we deem inexpedient, and in the end worse than futile, no proper basis for a peace of any kind, least of all for an enduring peace. That must be based upon justice and fairness and the common rights of mankind.

We cannot take the word of the present rulers of Germany as a guarantee of anything that is to endure, unless explicitly

supported by such conclusive evidence of the will and purpose of the German people themselves as the other peoples of the world would be justified in accepting. Without such guarantees, treaties of settlement, agreements for disarmament, covenants to set up arbitration in the place of force, territorial adjustments, reconstitutions of small nations, if made with the German Government, no man, no nation, could now depend on. We must await some new evidence of the purposes of the great peoples of the Central Empires. God grant it may be given soon, and in a way to restore the confidence of all peoples everywhere in the faith of the nations and the possibility of a covenanted peace.

ROBERT LANSING,
Secretary of State
of the United States of America.

A TABLE OF EVENTS
FROM
JULY 1, 1916, TO JUNE 30, 1917.

A TABLE OF EVENTS.

1916.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
July 1.	Allied offensive on the Somme opens; British take Mametz and other places; advance of the French.	Russian attack near Baranovitchi. Fighting on the Dniester; Russian reverse.
„ 2.	Further Allied successes; Fricourt and other villages captured. French occupy Curlu and Frise.	Fighting near Baranovitchi. Russian advance towards the Carpathians.
„ 3.	Fighting for Ovillers, Contalmaison, and La Boisselle. French capture villages. German success at Verdun.	Russian success near Baranovitchi. Russian offensive on the Styr begins.
„ 4.	British capture La Boisselle, and enter Mametz Wood. French advance towards Peronne. Further German success at Verdun.	Russian advance towards the Stokhod.
„ 5.	British advance towards Contalmaison. Further French advance towards Peronne.	Further Russian advance towards the Stokhod.
„ 6.	Fighting for Contalmaison and elsewhere. Mr. Lloyd George becomes War Secretary.	Further Russian advance; the Stokhod reached.
„ 7.	British capture Contalmaison. Fighting for Ovillers and La Boisselle.	Russians cross the Stokhod; they capture Delatyn.
„ 8.	Fighting for Ovillers and in Trônes Wood; British successes.	
„ 9.	Fighting for Ovillers and in Trônes Wood. French outside Peronne; they capture Hardecourt.	
„ 10.	Fighting for Ovillers; the place surrounded. Heavy fighting in Trônes Wood. Further French success.	
„ 11.	British drive Germans from Trônes Wood. German attacks at Verdun.	
„ 12.	British in possession of Mametz Wood. German attacks on Contalmaison repulsed. French success at Verdun.	
„ 13.		
„ 14.	New British attack on the Somme opens. German second line from Bazentin-le-Petit to Longueval taken. British cavalry in action.	

Southern Front.*	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1916.
			1 July
			2 „
			3 „
			4 „
			5 „
			6 „
			7 „
			8 „
	British occupy Tanga (German E. Africa).	German submarine <i>Deutschland</i> reaches Norfolk, Va.	9 „
	Turks attack British near Sanna - i - yat (Tigris).		10 „
		German submarine bombards Seaham Harbour.	11 „
	Russian success in the Caucasus.		12 „
			13 „
			14 „

* The term "Southern Front" covers the operations on the Italian frontier, in Serbia and the Balkans generally, and in Gallipoli down to its evacuation.

A TABLE OF EVENTS.

1916.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
July 15.	British advance towards Pozières, but lose High Wood. Fierce struggle in Delville Wood. German third line penetrated.	Russian attack on the Lipa begins.
„ 16.	Surrender of Ovillers. Struggle in Delville Wood continued. Heavy fighting near Peronne.	Russian successes against the Austrians on the Lipa.
„ 17.	Struggle in Delville Wood continued.	
„ 18.	British progress near Ovillers. Fighting at Fleury, Longueval, and elsewhere.	
„ 19.	British attack on Guillemont fails. Fighting in Delville Wood and at Longueval. Advance near Thiepval.	
„ 20.	British success at High Wood. French successes near Hardecourt and elsewhere; 2,900 prisoners taken.	Further Russian advance; 12,000 prisoners taken and the Styx crossed.
„ 21.	German attack near Chaulnes repulsed by the French.	
„ 22.	British attack on Pozières begins.	
„ 23.	British attack on Pozières; some successes. Attack on Guillemont fails. Fighting near Fleury.	
„ 24.	Fighting for Pozières continued; British successes; German counter-attacks repulsed.	
„ 25.	Fighting for Pozières; British success.	Fighting for Brody begins.
„ 26.	Capture of Pozières.	
„ 27.	British successes at Longueval and in Delville Wood. Murder of Captain Fryatt.	Russian advance towards Brody continued. Many prisoners taken.
„ 28.	Longueval in British hands.	Russians enter Brody. Fresh Russian attacks on the Stokhod.
„ 29.	Air Raid on Lincolnshire and Norfolk.	
„ 30.	Fighting around Pozières; British advance. French success near Hardecourt.	
„ 31.	Fighting for Guillemont. French advance near Maurepas. Zepelins over the Thames estuary.	

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1916.
	Further Russian success in the Caucasus; Baiburt taken.		15 July.
			16 „
			17 „
	British take Muanza (German E. Africa).		18 „
			19 „
			20 „
			21 „
			22 „
		Fight between destroyers in the North Sea.	23 „
			24 „
	Russians occupy Erzinghian; all Armenia in their hands.		25 „
			26 „
Fighting between Serbians and Bulgarians near Monastir.	The Sherif of Mecca takes Yambo on the Red Sea.		27 „
			28 „
			29 „
Russian troops land at Salonica.	British occupy Dodoma (German E. Africa).		30 „
			31 „

A TABLE OF EVENTS.

1916.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
Aug. 1.	Fighting at Verdun.	Fighting for Kovel.
„ 2.	Zeppelins over the Eastern Counties. French successes near Verdun and on the Somme.	
„ 3.	British success near Bazentin. French successes at Verdun. Sir Roger Casement hanged.	Fierce fighting on the Stokhod. Russian advance checked.
„ 4.	More fighting around Pozières. British attack advances our line. Fighting at Verdun.	Russian attacks on the Sereth begin.
„ 5.	British line near Pozières advanced further; German line penetrated.	
„ 6.	German counter-attack at Pozières repulsed.	Russian successes on the Sereth.
„ 7.	French success on the Somme.	Russian attack on the Dniester.
„ 8.	Allies advance towards Guillemont.	Russians reach the Dniester.
„ 9.	Zeppelin raid on England. British advance near Pozières.	Further Russian success on the Dniester.
„ 10.	British and French advances on the Somme.	More Russian successes on the Sereth. Russians enter Stanislaw.
„ 11.	British airmen bombard airship sheds at Brussels and Namur.	
„ 12.	French success near Hardecourt; the line advanced. German seaplane attacks Dover.	
„ 13.	British advance near Pozières. French success near Maurepas.	
„ 14.	Fighting at Pozières.	
„ 15.	Fighting at Pozières. French success at Verdun.	Russians occupy Jablonica.
„ 16.	French advance to Maurepas.	
„ 17.	British advance near Guillemont.	

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1916.
Italians bombard Austrian positions on the Isonzo.			1 Aug.
			2 "
			3 "
Italians attack at Monfalcone; they are driven back.	Turkish attack on the Suez Canal; Turks beaten.		4 "
	Turks pursued and routed near the Suez Canal.		5 "
Big battle on the Isonzo begins.			6 "
Battle on the Isonzo continued.			7 "
Italian successes; San Michele and other heights taken.	Turks drive back the Russians in the Caucasus and regain Mush and Bitlis.		8 "
Italians enter Gorizia.	End of the pursuit of the Turks near the Suez Canal.		9 "
Italian advance renewed. French bombard Doiran.			10 "
French seize Doiran and have other successes. Italian troops land at Salonica.			11 "
Italians seize much of the Carso.			12 "
		British destroyer <i>Lassoo</i> sunk by a mine in the North Sea.	13 "
			14 "
Italian advance on Trieste stopped.			15 "
			16 "
Bulgarians attack at Salonica.			17 "

A TABLE OF EVENTS.

1916.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
Aug. 18.	Great British attack near Thiepval and elsewhere. French success at Maurepas.	
,, 19.	Capture of Thiepval Ridge.	
,, 20.	Big German counter-attack near Thiepval.	
,, 21.	More German counter-attacks near Thiepval.	
,, 22.	British advance towards Thiepval.	
,, 23.	Heavy German counter-attack at Thiepval. Zeppelin raid on the Eastern Counties.	
,, 24.	Heavy German counter-attack. British nearer Thiepval. French in Maurepas. Zeppelin raid on London and Eastern Counties.	
,, 25.	More fighting near Thiepval. British airmen bombard air-ship sheds at Namur.	
,, 26.	German counter-attack near Thiepval repulsed.	
,, 27.	Italy declares war on Germany.	Rumania declares war on Austria-Hungary.
,, 28.		Germany declares war on Rumania.
,, 29.		
,, 30.	Hindenburg succeeds Falkenhayn as Chief of the Imperial General Staff.	Turkey declares war on Rumania.
,, 31.	Big German counter-attacks at High Wood foiled.	Russian advance in the Carpathians.
Sept. 1.		Further Russian advance in the Carpathians.

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1916.
Bulgarian advance towards Kavalla.			18 Aug.
		Activity in the North Sea. The cruisers <i>Nottingham</i> and <i>Falmouth</i> torpedoed.	19 „
			20 „
			21 „
	British occupy Kilossa (German E. Africa).		22 „
			23 „
			24 „
Bulgarians occupy Kavalla.	Russian victory near Royat (Caucasus); Mush and Bitlis retaken.	H.M.S. <i>Duke of Albany</i> torpedoed in the North Sea.	25 „
			26 „
Bulgarians at Kavalla.			27 „
British monitors bombard Bulgarians on the Struma. Zeppelin raid on Bucharest.			28 „
Austrians retire before the Rumanian advance.			29 „
			30 „
Rumanians advance into Hungary.			31 „
Allied warships anchor outside the Piraeus.			1 Sept.

A TABLE OF EVENTS.

1916.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
Sept. 2.		Russian advance in the Carpathians continued.
„ 3.	Zeppelin raid on London and the Eastern Counties; one raider destroyed by Lieut. W. L. Robinson at Cuffley, near Enfield. Heavy fighting around Thiépval. Guillemont taken. Ginchy and High Wood won and lost. French advance between Maurepas and the Somme. Fighting at Verdun.	Russian success on the Zlota Lipa.
„ 4.	British capture more ground near Guillemont.	
„ 5.	British capture Leuze Wood. French advance on a twelve-mile front; 2,700 prisoners.	Russian success near Halicz.
„ 6.	Further French advance south of the Somme continued. Much ground captured. French success at Verdun.	Russian advance near Halicz, which is bombarded; nearly six thousand prisoners taken.
„ 7.	German counter-attacks foiled.	
„ 8.	More German counter-attacks foiled.	
„ 9.	British take Ginchy.	
„ 10.		
„ 11.		Russian advance in the Carpathians.
„ 12.	British begin an intense bombardment. French advance north of the Somme; many positions carried.	
„ 13.	French success at Bouchavesnes and elsewhere.	

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1916.
Allies make certain demands on the Greek Government and seize German ships. Bulgarians in the Dobruja. Germans and Bulgarians invade the Dobruja.			2 Sept. 3 "
Fighting in the Dobruja.	Dar-es-Salam (German E. Africa) surrendered to the British.		4 "
			5 "
Bulgarians capture Tukrahan.			6 "
Rumanians occupy Orsova.			7 "
Rumanians bombard Austrian towns on the Danube.			8 "
Bulgarians invade Rumania and take Silistria.			9 "
British cross the Struma and drive back the Bulgarians.			10 "
Greek Army Corps at Kavalla goes over to the Germans.			11 " 12 "
			13 "

A TABLE OF EVENTS.

1916.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
Sept. 14.	British take strong positions near Thiepval. French success near Combles.	
,, 15.	Great British attack opens; tanks in action for the first time. Courcellette, Flers, and Martinpuich taken. French advance.	
,, 16.	German counter-attacks at Courcellette and Flers. Further British gains.	Russian success near Halicz.
,, 17.	Further French success near Combles.	
,, 18.	French capture Deniécourt. British advance nearer to Combles.	
,, 19.		
,, 20.	French success at Verdun.	
,, 21.	British success near Martinpuich.	
,, 22.	French advance towards Combles.	
,, 23.	Zeppelin raid on England; 38 killed and many injured; two raiders brought down in Essex.	
,, 24.	Fresh British bombardment begins.	
,, 25.	British advance between Combles and Martinpuich. Zeppelin raid on England; 36 deaths. Morval taken. French advance near Bouchavesnes.	
,, 26.	Further British and French advance; capture of Combles and Thiepval.	

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1916.
Italian advance in the Carso ; 2,000 prisoners and Austrian positions captured. Serbians advance towards Monastir. Rumanians advance in Transylvania, but retreat in the Dobruja.			14 Sept.
Italians capture San Grado. Allied success in Macedonia.			15 „
Russians and Rumanians begin their retreat in the Dobruja.			16 „
			17 „
Allied success in Macedonia. Rumanian advance in Transylvania.			18 „
Allies blockade the coast of Greece. Fighting in the Dobruja.			19 „
Italian advance near Gorizia and on the Carso. Austrians seize the Vulcan Pass and force back the Rumanians.			20 „
			21 „
			22 „
			23 „
			24 „
M. Venizelos leaves Athens.			25 „
			26 „

A TABLE OF EVENTS.

1916.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
Sept. 27.	British advance near Flers. French advance also. Fighting at Verdun.	
,, 28.	British and French again advance; Schwaben Redoubt taken.	
,, 29.	British success near Le Sars.	
,, 30.	British success near Thiepval.	
Oct. 1.	British advance near Le Sars. Zeppelin raid on London; raider destroyed at Potter's Bar.	Russians again take the offensive; fighting near Brody and Halicz.
,, 2.	Fighting near Le Sars; German success at Eaucourt l'Abbaye.	Further fighting between Russians and Austrians in the Lutsk region.
,, 3.	British recover Eaucourt l'Abbaye.	
,, 4.	Fighting near Le Sars. French success near Morval.	
,, 5.	British advance near Eaucourt l'Abbaye.	Russians attack on a wide front near Brody.
,, 6.	Fighting near Le Sars.	
,, 7.	British and French attacks; Le Sars taken and the line advanced.	
,, 8.	French success at Sailly-Saillisel.	
,, 9.		
,, 10.	French successes near Ablaincourt and Chaulnes.	
,, 11.		

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1916.
			27 Sept.
			28 „
			29 „
Fighting on the Struma; British success.			30 „
Fighting in the Dobruja between Germans and Rumanians.			1 Oct.
Fighting between Germans and Rumanians. Bulgarian reverse on the Struma.			2 „
Rumanian successes near Hermannstadt and in the Dobruja. Bulgarians retreat before Serbians. Greek Cabinet resigns.			3 „
Allied advance into Serbia. Rumanians withdraw across the Danube.			4 „
Rumanian withdrawal in Transylvania.			5 „
Further Rumanian retreat. British advance in Macedonia.		<i>U53</i> at Newport, R.I.	6 „
German successes against the Rumanians in Transylvania.			7 „
		Eight ships torpedoed by the <i>U53</i> .	8 „
			9 „
Italian successes on the Carso and elsewhere. French drive back Bulgarians in Macedonia. Allies take over the Greek fleet.			10 „
Further Italian advance on the Carso.			11 „

A TABLE OF EVENTS.

1916.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
Oct. 12.	French and British successes.	
„ 13.		
„ 14.	British advance near Belloy-en-Santerre.	
„ 15.	French successes near Bouchavesnes and Ablaincourt.	
„ 16.	French enter Saily-Saillisel.	
„ 17.		
„ 18.	Allied advance on the Somme; considerable French success.	
„ 19.		
„ 20.	German counter-attacks fail.	
„ 21.	British success; strong enemy positions near Thiepval captured.	Murder of the Austrian Premier, Count Sturgkh.
„ 22.	German seaplane destroyed after visiting Sheerness. French success near Saily-Saillisel.	
„ 23.	British capture German trenches.	
„ 24.	French success at Verdun; Douaumont and 3,500 prisoners taken.	
„ 25.	Further French success at Verdun.	
„ 26.	Further French success at Verdun.	

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1916.
Fighting in Transylvania between Germans and Rumanians.			12 Oct.
Germans invade Rumania.			13 "
			14 "
			15 "
Fighting between Germans and Rumanians in the passes of Transylvania.			16 "
Further fighting in the Transylvanian passes. Allied troops land at Athens.			17 "
Serbian advance on the Tehema (Macedonia).			18 "
More fighting in passes of Transylvania.			19 "
German offensive in the Dobruja. Fighting in the Trentino.			
Further Rumanian withdrawal through the passes.			20 "
German advance in the Dobruja; Tuzla occupied.		German cruiser <i>Kolberg</i> announced to have been torpedoed in the North Sea.	21 "
Germans take Constantza and advance through the passes of Transylvania.			22 "
German advance in Rumania continued.		Mine-sweeper <i>Genissa</i> torpedoed and sunk.	23 "
Germans capture the Vulcan Pass. Fighting all along the line.			24 "
Bulgarians invade Rumania and take Tchernavoda.			25 "
Fighting in Rumania; varying success.		German raid on the Channel. British destroyer <i>Flirt</i> and the empty transport <i>Queen</i> sunk.	26 "

A TABLE OF EVENTS.

1916.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
Oct. 27.		
„ 28.	British and French advance.	
„ 29.	French success near Sailly-Saillisel.	
„ 30.		Fighting near Halicz and Lutsk.
„ 31.		Heavy fighting near Halicz.
Nov. 1.	Allied advance near Lesbœufs and Sailly. Germans abandon Fort Vaux.	
„ 2.		
„ 3.	French success near Verdun.	
„ 4.		
„ 5.	German counter-attack near Flers succeeds. French take Saillisel and Vaux (Verdun).	Poland proclaimed an “independent” state.
„ 6.	French advance in St. Pierre Vaast Wood.	
„ 7.	Allied successes on the Somme; villages taken.	
„ 8.		
„ 9.		
„ 10.	British success near Thiepval. French success near Lesbœufs.	

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1916.
Rumanian successes ; prisoners taken.	German defeat at Lapeembe (E. Africa).		27 Oct.
Fighting in Rumania.		British liner <i>Marina</i> sunk.	28 „
Rumanian success in the Vulcan Pass.			29 „
Further Rumanian success ; British success on the Struma.			30 „
Italian success on the Carso ; 4,700 prisoners taken. Fighting in the passes of Transylvania.		Fight between destroyers in the North Sea. Italian raid on Pola.	31 „
Further Italian success on the Carso. More fighting in the Transylvanian passes.		Russian warships bombard Costantza.	1 Nov.
Another Italian success on the Carso.			2 „
German success against the Rumanians.			3 „
Fighting in Rumania ; further German advance.			4 „
Russians and Rumanians advance in the Dobruja. Fighting in the Vulcan Pass and elsewhere.		British liner <i>Arabia</i> sunk by submarine in the Mediterranean.	5 „
Russians and Rumanians check Germans in the Dobruja. Further German advance into Rumania.			6 „
Fighting in the Dobruja.			7 „
Serbian success near Monastir.		German destroyers shell Russian coast near Reval. Naval aeroplanes bombard Zeebrugge and Ostend.	8 „
			9 „
		10 „	

A TABLE OF EVENTS.

1916.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
Nov. 11.	French success at Saillisel.	
„ 12.	French capture Saillisel.	
„ 13.	British attack on the Ancre opens. Beaumont Hamel and 3,300 prisoners taken.	
„ 14.	Further British advance; Beaumont taken.	
„ 15.	German counter-attacks defeated.	
„ 16.	Further British advance on the Ancre.	
„ 17.	Further British advance on the Ancre.	
„ 18.	Further British advance on the Ancre.	
„ 19.		
„ 20.		
„ 21.	German raid on British trenches at St. Elie.	Death of Francis Joseph, Emperor of Austria.
„ 22.		
„ 23.		
„ 24.		
„ 25.		

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1916.
Further Serbian success near Monastir. Fighting at Orsova. Further Rumanian retirement.			11 Nov.
German advance in Rumania continued.			12 "
German advance in Rumania continued.			13 "
Allied successes in Macedonia. Further German advance in Rumania.			14 "
Serbians again advance in Macedonia. Germans advance rapidly into Rumania.		British airmen bombard Zeebrugge and Ostend.	15 "
Rumanian retirement continued.			16 "
		British airmen bombard Zeebrugge and Ostend.	17 "
German victory over Rumanians; important results. Allies seize Monastir.			18 "
Allies advance beyond Monastir. Germans advance farther into Rumania.	British victory in German E. Africa.		19 "
Germans capture Craiova. Fighting near Monastir.		British hospital ship <i>Britannia</i> sunk in the Ægean.	20 "
Fighting near Monastir.			21 "
Fighting near Monastir.			22 "
Fresh German invasion of Rumania. Germans take Orsova and other places.		German destroyers dash from Zeebrugge.	23 "
		Hospital ship <i>Braemar Castle</i> sunk in the Ægean.	24 "
German armies unite in Rumania; the position hopeless.			25 "

1916.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
Nov. 26.		
„ 27.	Zeppelin raid on England; two raiders destroyed.	
„ 28.	German aeroplane bombards London.	Russian victory in the Carpathians.
„ 29.	Changes at the Admiralty announced. Sir David Beatty to command the Grand Fleet.	
„ 30.		
Dec. 1.		
„ 2.		
„ 3.		
„ 4.		
„ 5.	Resignation of Mr. Asquith.	Russian success in the Carpathians.
„ 6.	Mr. Lloyd George becomes Prime Minister. Fighting for Hill 304 (Verdun).	
„ 7.	Fighting for Hill 304 (Verdun).	Russian success in the Carpathians.
„ 8.		

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1916.
German successes in Rumania continued. Serbian victory near Monastir.		German raid on Lowestoft.	26 Nov.
Rumanian retreat continued.			27 „
Germans nearing Bucharest.		British airmen bombard Zeebrugge.	28 „
			29 „
			30 „
			1 Dec.
Greek Government rejects Allies' demands. Troops landed at Piræus. After some fighting they withdraw.			
German progress in Rumania, but temporary Rumanian success near Bucharest.			2 „
German victory on the Arges. Fighting in the Dobruja. Serbian success near Monastir.		German submarine bombards Funchal (Madeira).	3 „
German advance through Rumania continued. Further Serbian success near Monastir.			4 „
German advance in Rumania continued. Serious disorders in Athens.			5 „
Germans seize Bucharest and Ploesti.			6 „
Another German victory over Rumanians.			7 „
Allies blockade Greece; blockade to continue until reparation for losses in Athens is made.			8 „

A TABLE OF EVENTS.

1916.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
Dec. 9.		
,, 10.		
,, 11.		
,, 12.	German Chancellor announces that Germany has proposed peace. General Nivelle succeeds General Joffre.	
,, 13.		Fighting near Halicz.
,, 14.		
,, 15.	French success at Verdun; several positions and 7,500 prisoners taken.	
,, 16.	Further French successes at Verdun.	
,, 17.	Fighting at Verdun; varying successes.	
,, 18.	Another French success at Verdun.	
,, 19.	Mr. Lloyd George answers the German peace proposals.	
,, 20.	Peace Note received from President Wilson.	
,, 21.		
,, 22.		
,, 23.		
,, 24.		
,, 25.		
,, 26.		
,, 27.		
,, 28.		

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1916.
Further Rumanian retreat.			9 Dec.
Temporary Rumanian success near Ploesti.			10 "
Allied Note to Greece; demobilization demanded.		British airmen raid Zeebrugge.	11 "
Rumanian retreat continued.			12 "
	British advance towards Kut and bombard Sanna-i-yat on the Tigris.		13 "
Rumanians evacuate Buzcu. Allies send ultimatum to Greece.			14 "
Greek Government accepts the ultimatum.	British victory at Kibata (German E. Africa).		15 "
			16 "
Rumanians still retreating in Wallachia and the Dobruja.			17 "
German advance on Braila checked temporarily by the Russians.			18 "
			19 "
	British advance on the Tigris.		20 "
Allies send another Note to Greece.	British occupy El Arish (Egypt).		21 "
			22 "
	British from Egypt advance towards Syria.		23 "
Germans still advancing in Rumania; the Dobruja almost in their hands.			24 "
Fighting near Braila.			25 "
German victory in Rumania.			26 "
			27 "
			28 "

A TABLE OF EVENTS.

1916.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
Dec. 29.	Fighting at Verdun.	
„ 30.	Allies reply formally to the German peace proposals.	
„ 31.	Fighting in Champagne.	
1917.		
Jan. 1.	German attack at Verdun ; raids on the British line.	
„ 2.		
„ 3.		Russian success in the Bukovina.
„ 4.		
„ 5.	Raids by British and Germans.	
„ 6.		
„ 7.		Russian success near Riga.
„ 8.	Activity on the British front.	Further Russian success near Riga.
„ 9.	British success near Beaumont-Hamel.	Russian advance near Riga.
„ 10.	Further British success near Beaumont-Hamel.	
„ 11.	Allied Powers issue their reply to President Wilson's Peace Note.	
„ 12.		Further Russian success near Riga.
„ 13.	Raids on British and German lines.	
„ 14.		
„ 15.	Activity on the French front.	
„ 16.		

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1916.
Germans nearing Braila.		German submarine sinks the French battleship <i>Gaulois</i> in the Mediterranean.	29 Dec. 30 "
German successes in the Dobruja. Rumanian success near Braila.			31 "
			1917.
	British success in German E. Africa.	British transport <i>Ivernia</i> sunk in the Mediterranean.	1 Jan.
Further German progress in Rumania.			2 "
German success in Rumania.			3 "
German successes near Braila.	Further British success in German E. Africa.		4 "
Germans capture Braila.			5 "
Fighting on the Sereth (Rumania).			6 "
			7 "
German success on the Sereth.			8 "
German success on the Sereth continued.	British seize Turkish position at Rafa (Sinai). British success on the Tigris.	H.M.S. <i>Cornwallis</i> sunk by a submarine in the Mediterranean.	9 "
Russian success in Rumania.	Another British success on the Tigris.		10 "
			11 "
Fighting in Rumania; varying success.			12 "
	British success on the Tigris.		13 "
Fighting in Rumania; varying success.			14 "
More fighting in Rumania.			15 "
Russian success in Rumania. Italian advance in Macedonia.			16 "

1917.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
Jan. 17.	Successful British raids.	
" 18.		
" 19.	Explosion in a London munitions factory; 69 deaths. Successful British raid.	
" 20.	Successful British raid.	
" 21.	Another British raid.	
" 22.	British airmen bombard Burbach. Fighting at Verdun and elsewhere.	Fighting near Riga.
" 23.	British and German trench raids.	Russian reverse near Riga.
" 24.	Trench raids by British, French, and Germans.	Further Russian retreat near Riga.
" 25.	British raid German lines. German attack at Verdun repulsed.	
" 26.	British raid German lines.	German attacks near Riga fail.
" 27.	British success near Le Transloy.	More fighting near Riga.
" 28.	British raid German lines; activity on the French front.	
" 29.	British raid German lines. Fighting in the Vosges and on the Meuse.	
" 30.	Fighting at Verdun and near Soissons.	Fighting near Riga again; German success.
" 31.	British and German trench raids. Germans announce their intention to begin an unrestricted warfare by submarines. All ships making for Allied ports to be sunk at sight, and also British hospital ships.	Russian successes near Riga and in Bukovina.
Feb. 1.	British raid near Gueudecourt.	Fighting near Halicz.
" 2.	British airmen bombard Bruges.	
" 3.	President Wilson breaks off diplomatic relations with Germany. British advance near Beaucourt.	
" 4.	Fighting near Beaucourt. President Wilson invites neutral Powers to support his action.	Fighting near Riga.

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1917.
Rumanian successes.			17 Jan.
German success on the Sereth.			18 "
			19 "
			20 "
			21 "
Bulgarians cross the Danube.		Two fights in the North Sea; one British and one German destroyer sunk.	22 "
Russians drive Bulgarians back across the Danube.			23 "
	Germans surrender in East Africa.		24 "
	British success near Kut; some gains afterwards lost.	German ship bombards Suffolk coast. British cruiser <i>Laurentic</i> sunk by a mine.	25 "
	Further British success near Kut.		26 "
Russian success in Rumania.	British take more Turkish positions near Kut.		27 "
			28 "
			29 "
Another Russian success in Rumania.			30 "
			31 "
	British success near Kut.		1 Feb.
			2 "
	Another British success near Kut.	German submarine sinks American steamer <i>Housatonic</i> .	3 "
			4 "

1917.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
Feb. 5.	British success near Gueudecourt.	
„ 6.	Fighting in Alsace and Lorraine. British success near Grandcourt. Scheme for National Service announced.	
„ 7.	British occupy Grandcourt. German success in Lorraine.	
„ 8.	British advance beyond Grandcourt; they seize the Sailly-Saillisel ridge.	
„ 9.	Further British advance. French airmen bombard Karlsruhe.	
„ 10.	British success near Serre Hill. Trench raids elsewhere.	
„ 11.	British success near Beaucourt.	Fighting near Halicz.
„ 12.	.	
„ 13.	Fighting near Serre and elsewhere.	Fighting in Galicia.
„ 14.	British success near Grandcourt. German trench raids.	
„ 15.	German success in Champagne. French raid near Compiègne.	Fighting in Galicia continued.
„ 16.	British war loan closed to subscribers; over £1,000,000,000 raised.	
„ 17.	British advance on the Ancre; strong positions captured.	
„ 18.	More fighting on the Ancre; German attacks repulsed.	
„ 19.	German success at Le Transloy; small post taken.	
„ 20.	British trench raids; success near Gueudecourt.	
„ 21.		Fighting in Bukovina.

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1917.
	British victory over the Senussi. Another British success near Kut.		5 Feb.
Fighting on the Sereth.	Rout of the Senussi completed.		6 "
		Liner <i>California</i> sunk by a German submarine.	7 "
		British destroyer sunk by a mine.	8 "
Austrian attack near Gorizia; ground captured.		Transport <i>Tyndareus</i> strikes a mine off the Cape.	9 "
British success near Lake Doiran; Bulgarians surprised.			10 "
	British success near Kut; strong Turkish positions taken.		11 "
Austrians lose their recent gains near Gorizia. Fighting on the Sereth.			12 "
			13 "
			14 "
	British success on the Tigris; 2,000 prisoners taken.		15 "
			16 "
	British fail to take the Sanna-i-yat position on the Tigris.		17 "
			18 "
			19 "
			20 "
		British Government issues a new order about the blockade policy.	21 "

1917.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
Feb. 22.	German trench raids.	
,, 23.	British successes. Trench raids by both British and Germans.	
,, 24.	British take Petit Miraumont.	
,, 25.	British advance on an eleven-mile front on the Ancre; Serre, Miraumont, and other places taken.	
,, 26.	Further British advance on the Ancre; trench raids elsewhere.	
,, 27.	British advance towards Bapaume.	
,, 28.	British still nearer to Bapaume; Gommecourt occupied.	Russian success in Bukovina.
March 1.	British advance near Miraumont. German aeroplane over Broadstairs.	
,, 2.		
,, 3.	British advance beyond Gommecourt.	
,, 4.	British advance near Péronne. British airmen raid Brebach. German attacks at Verdun; a little ground gained.	
,, 5.	French recover ground at Verdun. Further British advance in the Ancre valley.	
,, 6.	Much fighting in the air.	
,, 7.	Trench raids by the French.	
,, 8.	French success in Champagne; ground regained. Further British advance in the Ancre valley. Death of Count Zeppelin. Report of the Dardanelles Commission published.	
,, 9.		

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1917.
Fighting near Monastir between Bulgarians and Italians.	Trenches taken at Sanna-i-yat.	Seven Dutch ships torpedoed by Germans off Falmouth.	22 Feb.
	Further British success at Sanna-i-yat.		23 „
	British seize Turkish positions fifteen miles beyond Kut.	German destroyers bombard Margate and Broadstairs. German submarine sinks the liner <i>Laconia</i> .	24 „
			25 „
	British troops thirty miles beyond Kut; gunboats harass the retreating Turks.		26 „
			27 „
			28 „
	Russians occupy Hamadan (Persia).	British destroyer sunk by a mine; all lives lost.	1 March.
			2 „
3 „			
Defeat of the Rumanians.		4 „	
	British cavalry nearing Bagdad.	5 „	
	Turks in Sinai Peninsula fall back before the British advance.	6 „	
	Russians occupy Bistun (Persia).	7 „	
		8 „	
	British force a passage over the Diala and near Bagdad.	9 „	

1917.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
Mar. 10.		
„ 11.	Russian Revolution begun.	
„ 12.	French advance in Champagne.	
„ 13.	Big British advance near Bapaume. Progress near Gommecourt. Fighting in Champagne.	German raid in Galicia.
„ 14.	Further British advance near Bapaume. China breaks off diplomatic relations with Germany.	
„ 15.	Further British advance near Bapaume. The Tsar abdicates.	
„ 16.	Zeppelin raid on Kent and Essex. British progress near Bapaume.	
„ 17.	British occupy Bapaume and several villages. French advance towards St. Quentin; Lassigny occupied. Zeppelin L 39 destroyed at Compiègne. Resignation of the French Premier, M. Briand.	
„ 18.	Germans retreat on a wide front. British occupy Nesle, Péronne, and Chaulnes, and over sixty villages; French also advance. German attack at Verdun.	
„ 19.	British and French advance continued; more than forty villages taken. M. Ribot becomes Premier of France.	
„ 20.	Imperial War Cabinet meets in London. British occupy more villages in the Somme area. French seize Jussy, an important railway junction.	
„ 21.	British and French advance in the Somme area.	
„ 22.	German attacks near St. Quentin. Slackening of the German retreat.	
„ 23.	French advance between the Somme and the Oise.	
„ 24.	British and French successes in the Somme area.	
„ 25.	French advance close to St. Quentin.	

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1917.
British advance near Lake Doiran.	British within three miles of Bagdad. British occupy Bagdad.		10 Mar.
			11 „
			12 „
			13 „
French success near Monastir.	British troops 35 miles beyond Bagdad.		14 „
		British destroyer sunk by a mine.	15 „
		German destroyers bombard Ramsgate.	16 „
		British destroyer sunk off Dover.	17 „
	British occupy Bahriz (Mesopotamia).		18 „
			19 „
		French Dreadnought <i>Danton</i> torpedoed ; 300 lives lost.	20 „
		Hospital ship <i>Asturias</i> torpedoed ; 92 lives lost.	21 „
			22 „
			23 „
			24 „
		German torpedo boats bombard Dunkirk.	25 „

1917.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
Mar. 26.	British and French seize more positions in the Somme area.	
„ 27.	More villages occupied by British and French.	Russian reverse at Baranovitchi.
„ 28.	British cavalry in action; more positions taken. French advance.	
„ 29.		
„ 30.	British occupy more villages in the Somme area.	
„ 31.	British capture more villages.	
April 1.	British near St. Quentin.	Russian defeat on the Stokhod at Tobol; ammunition supplies destroyed.
„ 2.	British still nearer St. Quentin; several German positions taken.	
„ 3.	French capture villages and approach St. Quentin.	
„ 4.	Allied successes near St. Quentin and elsewhere.	
„ 5.	Further Allied successes. Much fighting in the air.	
„ 6.	United States declares war on Germany. Much fighting in the air.	
„ 7.	British attack near Cambrai. Fighting near Rheims; the town heavily shelled. War in the air continued.	
„ 8.		
„ 9.	Brazil at war with Germany. Austria at war with U.S.A. British attack on a big front from Lens to St. Quentin. Considerable successes; Canadian troops take Vimy Ridge; 9,000 prisoners captured.	
„ 10.	British advance near Arras continued.	
„ 11.	British advance continued; more successes.	
„ 12.	British capture more German positions and prisoners.	
„ 13.	British capture more positions, including Liévin, and many prisoners.	

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1917.
French success near Monastir.	British force enters Palestine and engages the Turks at Gaza.	British destroyer sunk by a mine.	26 Mar.
More fighting near Monastir.	Turks routed at Gaza.		27 "
			28 "
			29 "
			30 "
			31 "
			1 April
	British occupy Deli Abbas, sixty miles beyond Bagdad.		2 "
			3 "
			4 "
			5 "
			6 "
		British force attacks Zeebrugge; German destroyers damaged.	7 "
			8 "
		Hospital ship <i>Salta</i> mined; fifty-two missing.	9 "
			10 "
			11 "
			12 "
			13 "

A TABLE OF EVENTS.

1917.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
April 14.	British seize positions near Lens.	
	Allied airmen raid Freiburg.	
„ 15.	Small German success at Lagnicourt.	
„ 16.	French advance between Rheims and Soissons ; 10,000 prisoners taken.	
„ 17.	French make further progress ; fighting on the line of the Aisne.	
„ 18.	More progress on the Aisne ;	
	French take Chavonne and other places.	
„ 19.	French continue their advance.	
„ 20.	French capture more positions.	
„ 21.	British success on the Scarpe.	
„ 22.	Further British progress.	
„ 23.	British attack near Arras ; several positions and 1,500 prisoners taken.	
„ 24.		
„ 25.	Further British successes near Arras.	
„ 26.	Fighting near Arras ; British successes.	
„ 27.		
„ 28.	Another British attack near Arras ; villages captured.	
„ 29.	British success near Oppy.	
„ 30.	French success in Champagne.	
May 1.	French advance on a six-mile front in Champagne.	

A TABLE OF EVENTS.

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Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1917.
			14 April.
			15 "
			16 "
	British victory near Gaza (Palestine); Turkish positions taken.	British hospital ships <i>Lanfranc</i> and <i>Donegal</i> sunk by German submarines; German prisoners rescued.	17 "
	British success in Mesopotamia.		18 "
		Fight between British destroyers <i>Swift</i> and <i>Broke</i> and a German flotilla; two or three German ships sunk.	19 "
			20 "
	Another British success in Mesopotamia.		21 "
	British occupy Samarra (Mesopotamia).	British seaplanes attack German destroyers off the Belgian coast.	22 "
			23 "
			24 "
British advance near Lake Doiran.			25 "
		German destroyers bombard Dunkirk. Some fighting; French destroyer sunk.	26 "
		German destroyers bombard Ramsgate.	27 "
			28 "
			29 "
	Further British success in Mesopotamia.		30 "
			1 May

A TABLE OF EVENTS.

1917.	Western Front ~~and~~ General.	Eastern Front.
May 2.	More fighting in Champagne. Budget introduced by Mr. Bonar Law.	
„ 3.	British attack again in force near Arras; Fresnoy and other places taken; German counter-attacks.	
„ 4.	Further British progress near St. Quentin. French successes near Rheims. Changes in Admiralty administration announced.	
„ 5.	French advance beyond the Aisne on a front of twenty miles; 6,000 prisoners taken. British success near Lens.	
„ 6.	German counter-attacks on the Aisne fail. War Council meets in Paris.	
„ 7.	French and British successes. German aeroplane drops bombs on London.	
„ 8.	Germans regain Fresnoy. French and British successes elsewhere.	
„ 9.		
„ 10.	French advance near Craonne.	
„ 11.	Fighting near Arras; ground lost and regained.	
„ 12.	British successes near Arras; positions and prisoners taken.	
„ 13.		
„ 14.	British capture Rœux.	
„ 15.	Fighting around Rœux and Bullecourt. General Pétain succeeds General Nivelle as commander of the French armies.	
„ 16.		
„ 17.	British take Bullecourt. German attacks on the French line fail.	

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1917.
French and Greek (Venizelists) attack Bulgarians in Macedonia. British attack and advance between the Vardar and Lake Doiran. French and Greeks (Venizelists) again attack Bulgarians in Macedonia. Italian attacks near Gorizia and on the Carso. British advance near Lake Doiran. Italian attacks continued; 3,500 prisoners taken. Fighting on the Isonzo. More fighting on the Isonzo; Italian successes.		British destroyer sunk by a mine in the Channel.	2 May.
			3 "
		British transport <i>Transylvania</i> sunk in the Mediterranean; over 400 lives lost.	4 "
			5 "
			6 "
			7 "
			8 "
			9 "
		Fight in the North Sea; German destroyers driven into Zeebrugge.	10 "
			11 "
		Zeebrugge attacked from sea and air.	12 "
			13 "
		Zeppelin L 22 destroyed in the North Sea by the British Navy.	14 "
		Austrian fleet sinks fourteen British drifters in the Adriatic.	15 "
			16 "
		Arrival of U.S. destroyers in British waters announced.	17 "

A TABLE OF EVENTS.

1917.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
May 18.		
„ 19.		Russian Government declares against a separate peace.
„ 20.	British success between Bullecourt and Fontaine. French success in Champagne.	
„ 21.	Further British progress between Bullecourt and Fontaine.	
„ 22.	French success near Craonne. Resignation of Count Tisza, the Hungarian Premier.	
„ 23.	Zeppelin raid on East Anglia.	
„ 24.		
„ 25.	Successful British trench raids. German success on the Aisne.	
„ 26.	British trench raid near St. Quentin. Fighting on the Aisne and in Champagne.	
„ 27.	German attacks on Moronvilliers (Champagne).	
„ 28.	British and German trench raids.	
„ 29.		
„ 30.	Further German attacks at Moronvilliers. Trench raids elsewhere.	
„ 31.	German attacks at Moronvilliers and elsewhere in Champagne; slight successes.	
June 1.	Slight German gain from the French near Laffaux.	
„ 2.	Successful British attack near Lens. Fighting near Craonne. Brazil declares war against Germany.	

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1917.
Italian success on Monte Vodice.			18 May.
Austrian success near Plava.			
More fighting for Monte Vodice.			19 „
Italian successes on Monte Vodice and near Gorizia.			20 „
			21 „
			22 „
Italian advance on the Carso; 9,000 prisoners.			23 „
Heavy fighting on the Carso continued.			24 „
Fighting on the Carso continued; further Italian progress.		German aeroplanes raid Folkestone. Seventy-six persons killed. Three enemy machines destroyed.	25 „
More fighting on the Carso; successes for both sides.		Hospital ship <i>Dover Castle</i> torpedoed in the Mediterranean.	26 „
Further Italian progress; the Timavo crossed.			27 „
More fighting between Italians and Austrians.		H.M.S. <i>Hilary</i> , armed merchantman, sunk in the North Sea.	28 „
			29 „
			30 „
Austrian repulse on Monte Vodice.			31 „
		British airmen attack Ostend, Bruges, and Zeebrugge.	1 June.
		British transport <i>Cameronian</i> sunk in the Mediterranean.	2 „

A TABLE OF EVENTS.

1917.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
June 3.	Heavy fighting near Lens ; British progress temporarily checked. Allied airmen very active.	
„ 4.		
„ 5.	German aeroplanes over Kent and Essex ; thirty-eight casualties. Fighting near Lens and south of the Scarpe.	
„ 6.		
„ 7.	Fighting on the Scarpe ; German positions captured. Great British attack ; Messines Ridge and 5,000 prisoners captured.	
„ 8.	Fighting for Messines continued ; German counter - attacks repulsed. British success between Lens and La Bassée.	
„ 9.		Russian Government declines the offer of an armistice.
„ 10.		
„ 11.	British success beyond Messines.	
„ 12.		
„ 13.	Further British success beyond Messines.	
„ 14.	Air raid on London ; 160 deaths.	
„ 15.		
„ 16.	Another British attack near Messines ; much ground gained. Infantry Hill near Monchy stormed.	
„ 17.	British progress near Bullecourt.	
„ 18.	More fighting near Bullecourt.	
„ 19.	Zeppelin raid on England ; one raider destroyed. German success against the French at Hurtebise.	

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1917.
			3 June.
			4 "
		Fight in the Channel ; German destroyer <i>S30</i> sunk. Ostend bombed by British airmen.	5 "
			6 "
			7 "
Italians occupy Ya- nina (Greece).			8 "
			9 "
Successful Italian at- tack in the Tren- tino.	British success in Ger- man E. Africa.		10 "
		Two German seaplanes destroyed in the Channel.	11 "
French troops occupy Corinth and Larissa. Abdication of King Constantine of Greece ; his son Alexander becomes king.	British capture Saliff, a Turkish fortress on the Red Sea.		12 "
Allied troops land at the Piræus. Italian success on Mont Or- tigara.			13 "
		British Navy destroys Zeppelin Z 43.	14 "
			15 "
Italian success on Como Cavento.			16 "
Italian advance on the Carso.			17 "

1917.	Western Front and General.	Eastern Front.
June 18.	French success in Champagne.	
	Slight British reverse near Monchy.	
,, 19.	Fighting around Lens.	
,, 20.	British regain ground lost near Monchy. German success near Vauxaillon.	
,, 21.	French recover ground lost near Vauxaillon. Fighting between British and Germans near the Belgian coast.	
,, 22.	Big German attacks on the French near Bray - en - Laonnois; a salient taken.	
,, 23.	More fighting between French and Germans in Champagne.	
,, 24.	British progress near Lens. French success at Vauxaillon. Many trench raids.	
,, 25.	Further British progress near Lens. American troops land in France. French success on the Craonne ridge.	
,, 26.	Further British progress near Lens.	
,, 27.	German attack near Fontaine repulsed.	
,, 28.	British success near Lens; Avion entered and positions taken. French reverse at Verdun.	
,, 29.	French regain ground lost at Verdun.	
,, 30.	More British progress near Lens. Fighting near Cerny.	

Southern Front.	Africa and Asia.	Naval Operations.	1917.
			18 June.
Italian success in the Trentino.			19 "
			20 "
Another Italian success over the Austrians.			21 "
			22 "
		P.O. liner <i>Mongolia</i> sunk by a mine off Bombay.	23 "
			24 "
			25 "
	British airmen raid Turkish camp on the Tigris.		26 "
		French cruiser <i>Kléber</i> sunk by a mine near Brest. British transport <i>Armada</i> sunk in the Atlantic.	27 "
			28 "
			29 "
Italian reverse in the Agnella Pass.			30 "

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